Sept. 3, 1990

THE NEW YORKER

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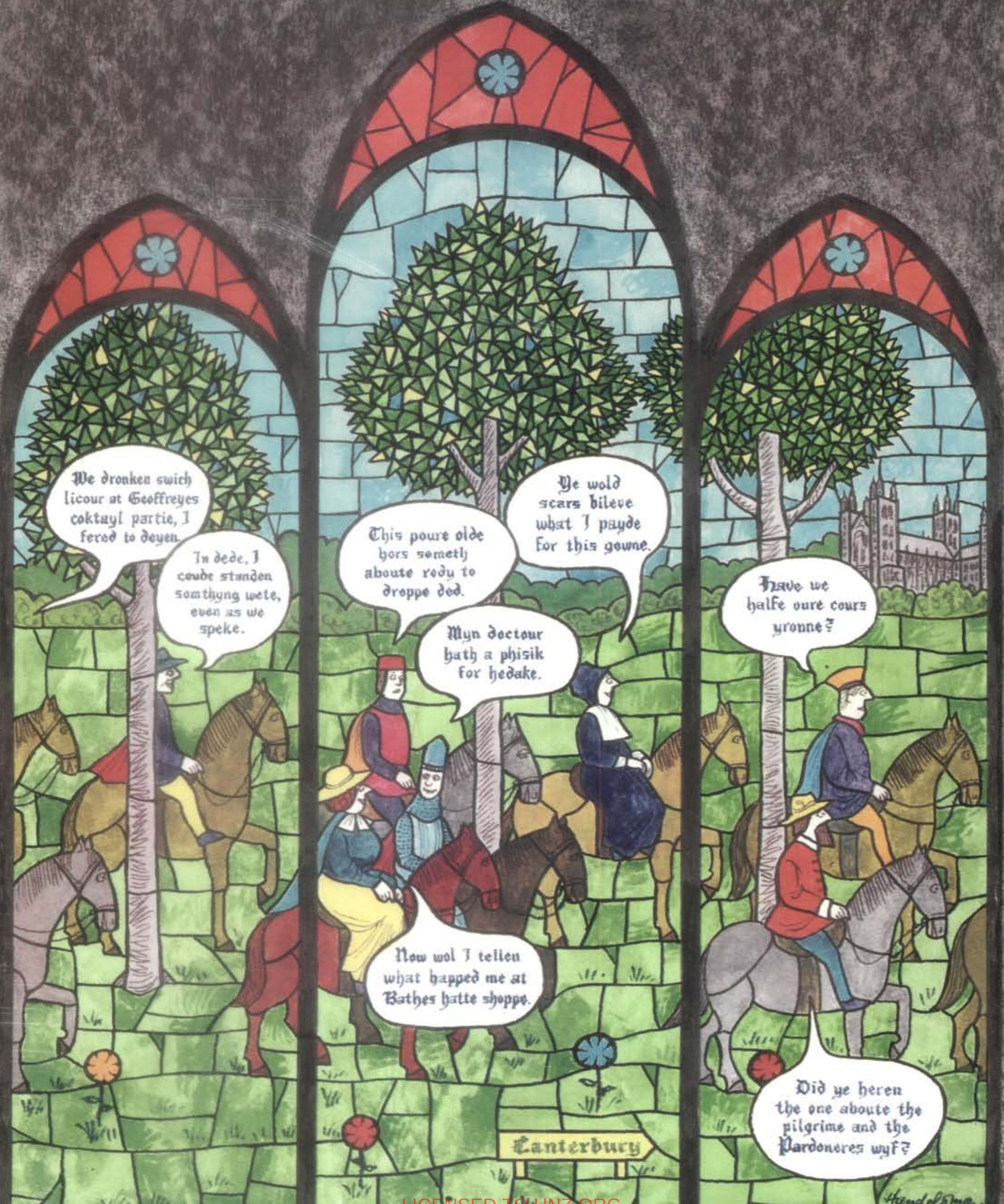
We dronken swich licour at Geoffreyes coktayl partie, I fered to deyen.
In dede, I coude standen somthyng wete, even as we speke.
This poure olde hors someth aboute redy to droppe ded.
Ye wold scars bileve what I payde for this gowne.
Myn doctour hath a phisik for hedake.
Have we halfe oure cours yronne?
Now wol I tellen what happed me at Bathes hatte shoppe.
Did ye heren the one aboute the pilgrime and the Pardoneres wyf?
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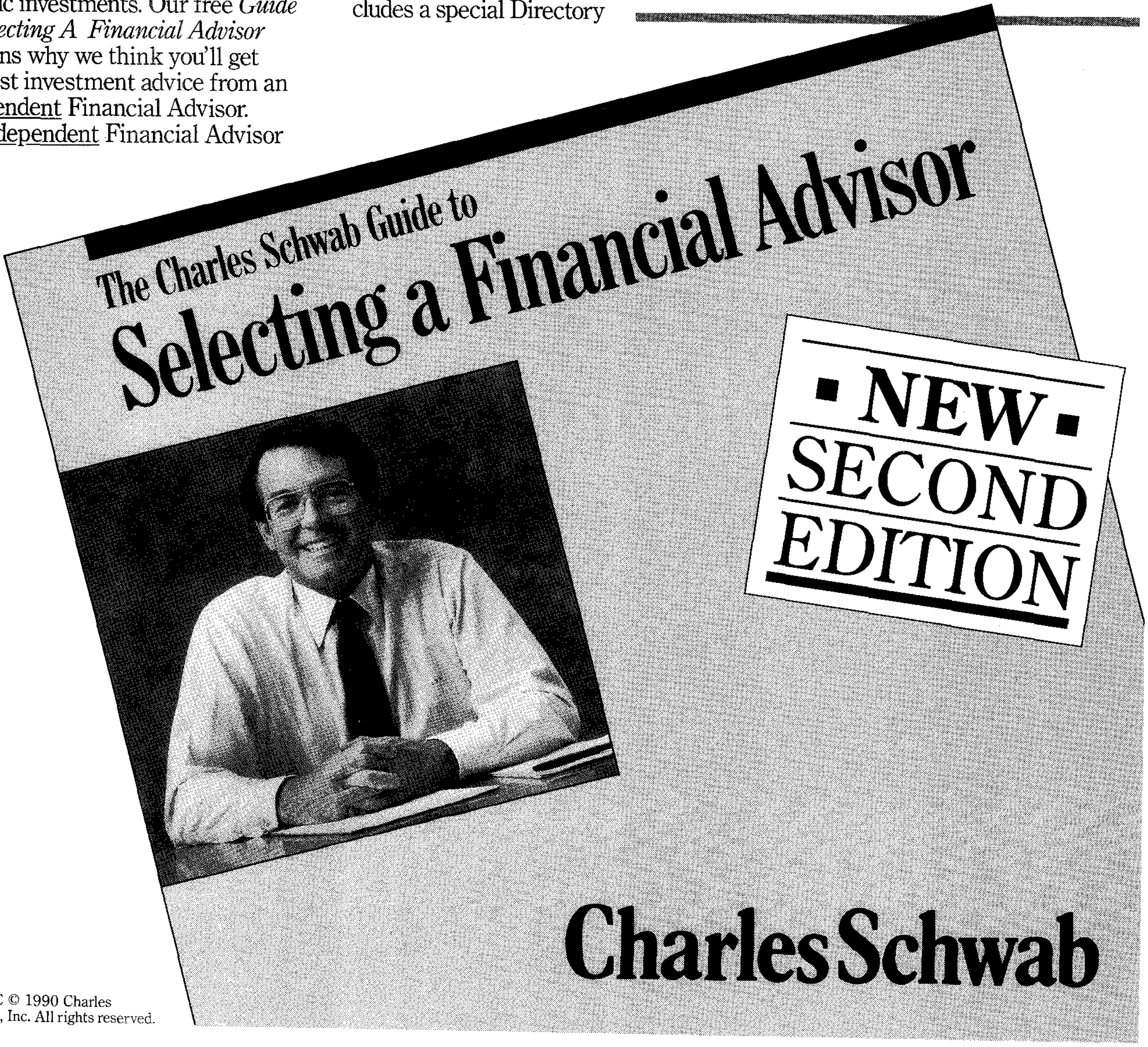

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SEPTEMBER 3, 1990

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 4

THE TALK OF THE TOWN 29

"HEDGES" . . . . *Elizabeth Jolley* 34

"SHE WAS WAITING TO BE TOLD" (POEM) . . . . *Deborah Gottlieb Garrison* 38

"WILL" (POEM) . . . . *L. S. Asekoff* 44

PROFILES (J. CARTER BROWN) . . . . *Calvin Tomkins* 48

MUSICAL EVENTS . . . . *Andrew Porter* 91

A REPORTER AT LARGE (KENYA) . . . . *Raymond Bonner* 93

BOOKS . . . . *Whitney Balliett* 106
  BRIEFLY NOTED 107

COVER: *J. B. Handelsman*

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

Ethyl Eichelberger was a lanky New Yorker with a clear voice and varied theatrical skills, most of them reportedly self-taught, none developed to a virtuoso level. But Eichelberger's fans loved him unreservedly, as one loves a small child. His performing energy was infectious and unquenchable. He would deliver monologues, tell jokes, sing while playing the piano or the accordion, fold himself up like a pup tent and then pop to full size and stomp about fast enough to circulate a stiff breeze, all the while putting across the fine points of some loner's life story. That could be the first five minutes of his show. Then, just when you thought he had tried everything a human being could to entertain another human being, short of lighting a torch and eating fire, he would light a torch and eat fire.

Our knowledge of Mr. Eichelberger's art is limited. We saw him on Broadway, as the Ballad Singer in the recent, ill-fated production of "The 3 Penny Opera," and several times at P.S. 122, in the East Village, where he cavorted through high-octane burlesque versions of literary and cinematic standards, assisted by the actress known as Black-Eyed Susan. An Eichelberger connoisseur who had followed his appearances over the past fifteen years in Charles Ludlam's Ridiculous Theatrical Company, or in uptown shows such as the 1987 production of "The Comedy of Errors"—where he played the dual role of the Abbess and the Courtesan—might question our assessment that his gifts were most fully apprehended in a cabaret format. In the cramped quarters of P.S. 122, though, where a little expertise goes a very long way, he had the charm of a genie sprung from a bottle. His characters came from China, Russia, France, and the walkup around the block, but they all knew how to carry a tune, tickle the ivories, cut a rug, time a punch line, drape a bodice, plunder the classics, look to the stars, and hope for the best.

The performer was born James Roy Eichelberger, to Amish parents in Pekin, Illinois. He discovered his vocation in college, came to New York in 1975, and legally changed his first name not long after. In 1988, he was diagnosed with AIDS, and he had been in declining health recently. Last month, he took his own life, at the age of forty-five.

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	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5			

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

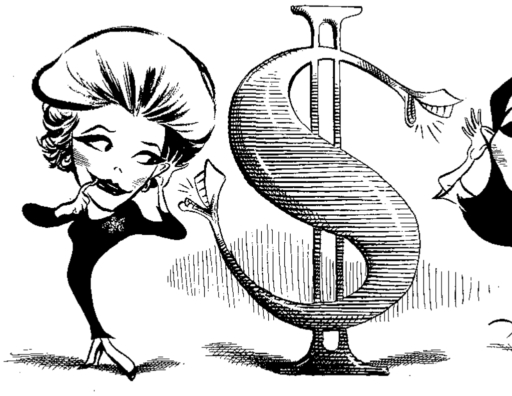
Camille—A revival of Charles Ludlam's 1973 play. With Everett Quinton, who also directed. In previews. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

Indecent Materials—A double bill: the curtain-raiser, "Indecent Materials," is an adaptation of some of Jesse Helms' speeches on the arts and obscenity; and "Report from the Holocaust" is an adaptation of Larry Kramer's essays on the AIDS crisis. Opens Aug. 27 at 8, and runs through Sept. 9. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Money Talks—A comedy by Edwin Schloss about two competitive Upper East Siders, who are played by Dolores Gray and Helen Gallagher. In previews. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

NEW THIS SEASON

Aspects of Love—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/23/90.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)



Dolores Gray and Helen Gallagher in "Money Talks"

By and for Havel—A pair of one-acters in revival. "By"—**audience**—is based on an episode that occurred when Václav Havel had a menial job in a brewery; "for"—**catastrophe**—is Samuel Beckett's poetic tribute to Havel when he was in prison. Together, they make an evening that is both comic and stirring. With Kevin O'Connor and Lou Brockway. (3/19/90) (John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

City of Angels—Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular settings and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (12/25/89) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Forever Plaid—Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. The performances of Jason Graae, Stan Chandler, David Engel, and Guy Stroman (as the Plaids, a close-harmony group snuffed out in the prime of life and brought back to earth for a single evening) are so deadpan, and the songs (arranged by James Raitt) are rendered at such a heightened pitch of musical good faith, that only from Ross's script and choreography would you know the thing is a parody. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

Further Mo'—This lively, touching, and brilliantly performed small-scale musical, set in a New Orleans vaudeville theatre in 1927, is a real gem. Written by Vernel Bagneris (who also stars), it uses blues singing (mostly quite recherché songs) to say something about the plight of the black entertainer in American history and culture. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

The Grapes of Wrath—This stage adaptation (by Frank Galati, who also directed) is the most truly adult version of Steinbeck's novel to date. It appeals to the mind rather than to the emotions; all the same, there's a cumulative effect. Don't go expecting to see John Ford or "Balm in Gilead," but expect to leave feeling as if you had. With Lois Smith and Gary Sinise. (4/2/90) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 2.)

It's Still My Turn—Terry Sweeney, a former "Saturday Night Live" cast member, portrays Nancy Reagan in this one-man show. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

Lettice & Lovage—The marvellous Maggie Smith plays Lettice Douffet, a freewheeling guide to England's stately homes, and the elegant Margaret Tyzack plays a reprimanding envoy sent by Lettice's employers in Peter Shaffer's merry comedy about an unlikely friendship and other matters. Paxton Whitehead and Bette Henritze are effective in supporting roles. Michael Blakemore was the director. (4/9/90) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Light Up the Sky—This revival—after forty-two years—of Moss Hart's comedy about the Boston tryout of a Broadway-bound play is only intermittently funny. The most entertaining scenes are those with Betsy Joslyn, as a producer's wife, who's engaged in a nonstop gin game with Peggy Cass, the star's mother; and, near the end, with the invaluable Bill McCutcheon, as a visiting Shriner. Among the other admirable performers are John Bolger, Linda Carlson, Humbert Allen Astredo, and John C. Vennema. Larry Carpenter directed. The handsome setting, by Andrew Jackness, of a suite at the Ritz-Carlton was lighted by Dennis Parichy, and Martin Pakledinaz designed the appropriate costumes. Whatever Mr. Hart's intentions were, affection supersedes satire every step of the way; he was stagestruck. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

The Man Who Fell in Love with His Wife—Kevin Conway in a play by Ted Whitehead. (Theatre 808, Lexington Ave. at 62nd St. 223-2547. Closes Sept. 1.)

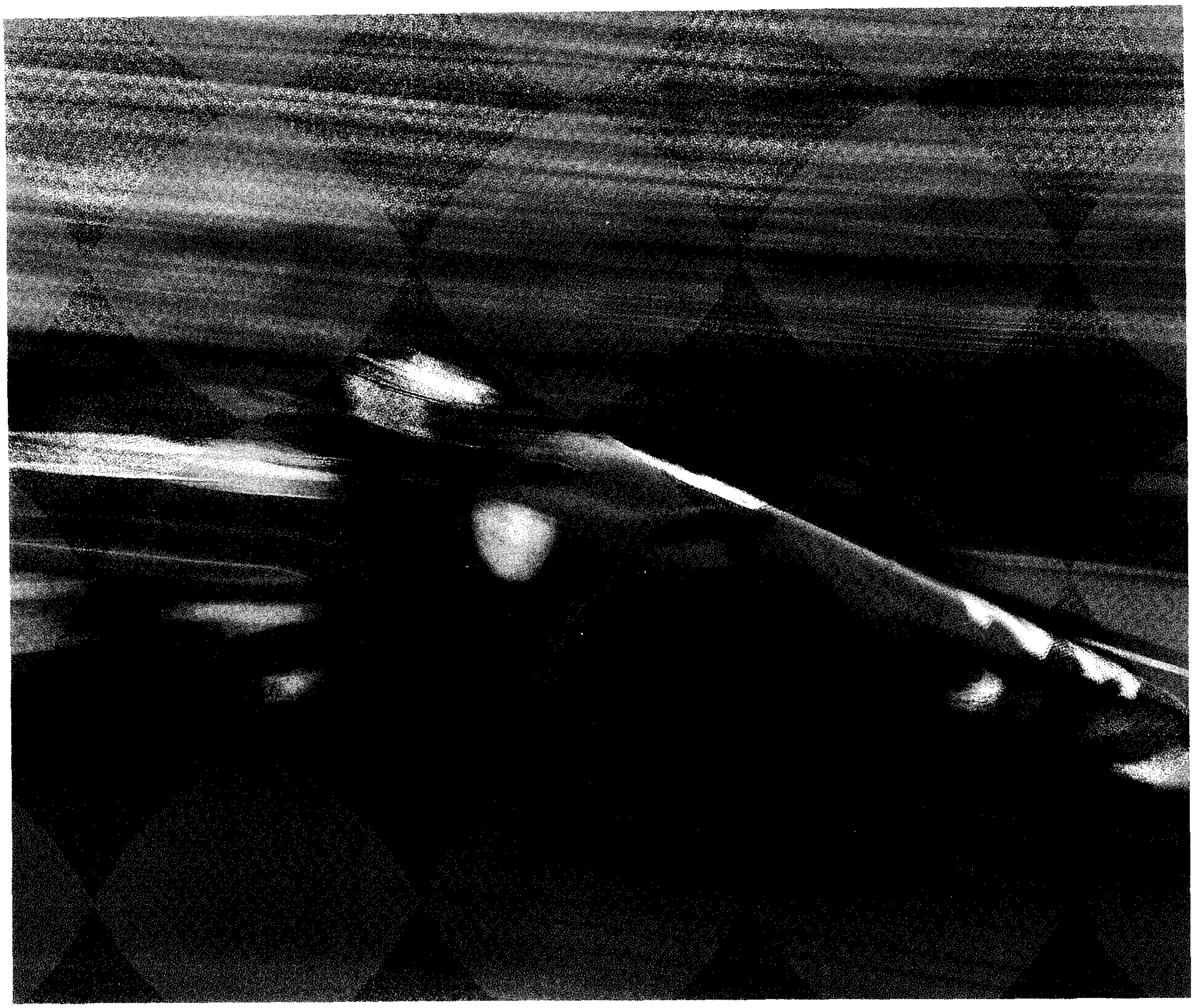
Philadelphia, Here I Come—Brian Friel's wonderfully funny and touching play about a young man from a small Irish village on the eve of his departure for America really holds up in Paul Weidner's beautiful production. Grab this one: revivals this good don't come around often. (South Street Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Sept. 2.)

The Piano Lesson—August Wilson's new drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes—even if the subtle ensemble acting in Lloyd Richards' production is thrown out of balance by an excessive performance by Charles S. Dutton. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

Prelude to a Kiss—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Barnard Hughes is the old man, Mary-Louise Parker is the bride, and Timothy Hutton is the groom. Starting Sept. 4, John Dossett takes over for Mr. Hutton. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

Quiet on the Set—A comedy by Terrell Anthony about soap operas, which features a cast of actors from "All My Children" and "The Guiding Light." (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Richard III—Denzel Washington is miscast as gleeful, lethal Gloucester in this unsatisfactory production. Nevertheless, the magnificent Mary Alice gives a performance of the



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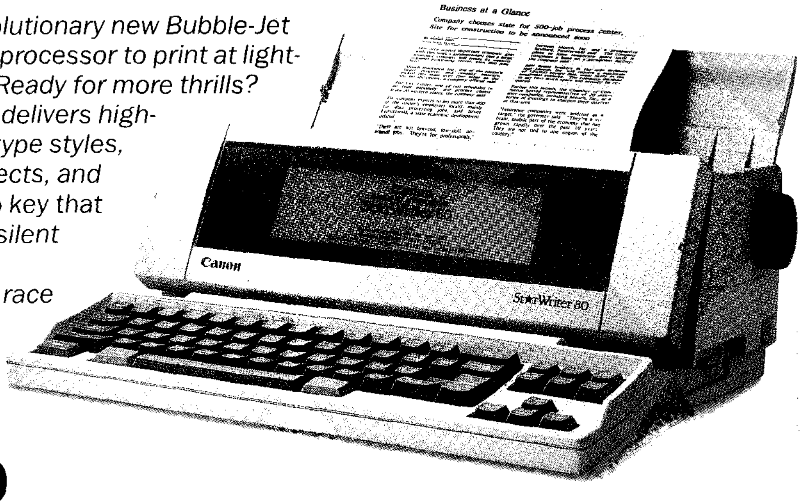
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greatest strength as bitter old Queen Margaret, and there is commendable work by Nancy Palk, Armand Schultz, Daniel Davis, and Sharon Washington, as assorted exemplars of royal blood. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. Closes Sept. 2. For information about tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

The Rothschilds—A revival of the 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book). (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Six Degrees of Separation—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play, other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright and the director, Jerry Zaks. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. What more do you want? With Swoosie Kurtz and Courtney B. Vance. (6/25/90) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Smoke on the Mountain—This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray (who also performs, along with six other versatile actor-musicians), it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Spunk—George C. Wolfe has adapted three short stories by Zora Neale Hurston, set in Harlem and the South, to make a gorgeous jazz-and-blues entertainment, giving them a powerful injection of his own mordant humor. Chic Street Man, a singer and guitarist, wrote the dynamic score. With Ann Duquesnay (singer), and Victor Mack, Reggie Montgomery, Kevin Jackson, and Danitra Vance (actors). Mr. Wolfe directed. (5/7/90) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Sept. 2.)

Tru—Robert Morse gives a deeply thought-out, accomplished performance as Truman Capote—by turns funny, bitchy, ironic, and rueful—at the end of his life and his tether. The play was written and directed by Jay Presson Allen. (1/1/90) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 1.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Caludio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while LaVern Baker, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mightly spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently celebrated its thirtieth birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **A FEW GOOD MEN:** "Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show (except for a glorious, eccentric dance by Michael Jeter), but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **GYPSY:** This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). With Linda Lavin. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 1.) . . . **JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY:** A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choregraphed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 1.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DANCE

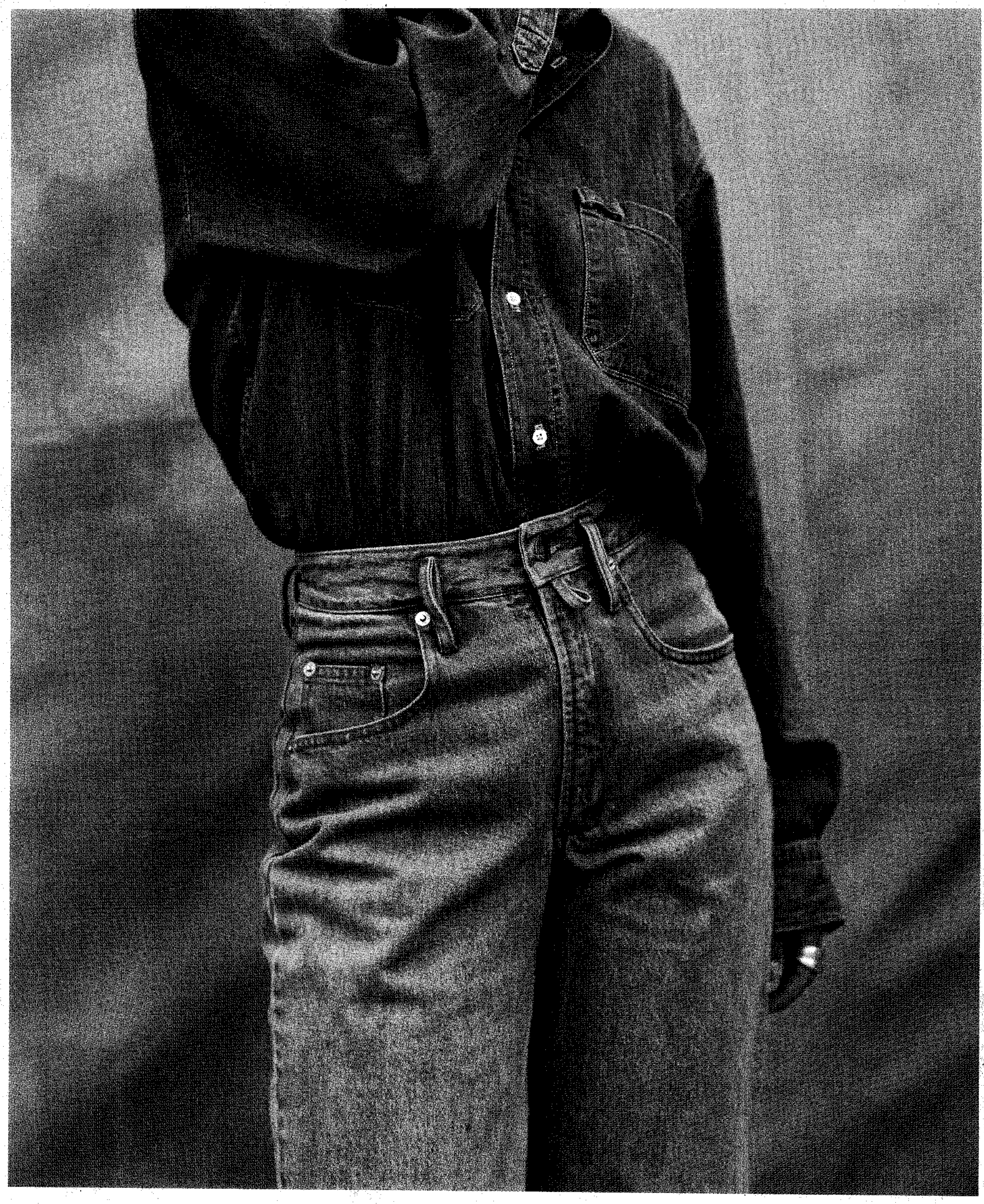
FOR centuries, the Hawaiians had no written language, yet they had a history. It was embodied in their ancient form of music and dance, the hula. As the chants and movements were handed down over the generations, so was the identity of a people. We learned this and much else about Hawaiian dance from a vivid half-hour-long documentary, "Kumu Hula: Keepers of a Culture," by the Philadelphian Robert Mugge. The film was recently introduced to a national audience on the public-television series "Alive from Off Center." Owing in large part to generous support from the N.E.A. Dance Program, about forty per cent of the series' offerings in recent seasons have been devoted to dance.

This fall, the series loses its executive producer of the past three seasons and producer of the two before that, John Schott—himself a filmmaker ("Deal") and the director of the media-studies program at Carleton College. He leaves to head the brand-new Independent Television Service, mandated by Congress in 1989 as a way to directly finance (and so, it is hoped, to more widely encourage) films and videos on a multitude of subjects by independent producers who supply public television. We caught up with Mr. Schott during his transition between jobs. He was enthusiastic about the hula program, noting that, although the film was conservative in its production, it fulfilled the series' basic goals. He also made the point that a program produced under the title "Alive from Off Center" needn't be the product of postmodern dancers with a board of directors. "There are many important modes of expression that have been overlooked by our dominant Western tradition," he said. "Hula is an example." He continued, "We've just come through a decade in which art theory and criticism caused us to doubt almost everything. If there's an avant-garde that's still vital, it deals with content and social change, taking a place at the center of the cultural debate about who and what we are."

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—Final performances of the season. Aug. 28-Sept. 1: Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane & Co. . . . ¶ Aug. 28-Sept. 1: Liz Lerman/Dance Exchange. (Becket, Mass. For information about show times and tickets, call 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

THE BLUE ANGEL, a cabaret and restaurant that opened earlier this year at 323 West 44th Street, is the kind of place that businessmen might take their out-of-town clients to after closing the big deal: the club's ads, which feature a titillating sketch of a dancing showgirl, promise a "Spectacular French/Las Vegas Revue." We stopped in recently, and as we stood in the foyer while the maître d' mulled over the seating chart (although, on this particular night, a "PLEASE SEAT YOURSELF" sign might have done the job), we thought the club looked fairly lavish. But upon closer inspection of the rental-quality furniture, the florid etched glass, and the ample fake gold leaf, we realized that what we had here was a Ramada Inn rethought by someone who'd seen "Sunset Boulevard" one time too many. The revue itself is in the tradition of "Star Search," the "Miss America Pageant" talent competition, and "The Perry Como Christmas Special." The performers, singing over canned disco music, try their best to look cheerful while belting out such lyrics as "It's a party at the Blue Angel. . . . It's undeniably clear." As we watched the young cast jump around in big



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feathers, sequins, and G-strings, we wondered how many of them were wishing that they'd listened to their parents and gone to graduate school. In one routine, women riding a mock subway and dressed in men's business suits nonchalantly read the newspaper while other passengers yank their clothes off. In another, the performers are turned out like tribespeople at a Shriners' convention in Snowmass. To round out the evening, there's a motor-mouthed magician with a Pépé le Pew accent, whose coup de théâtre involved pulling two live baby chicks out of a Korean businessman's zipper. If you're looking for a night of over-the-top camp entertainment, you don't have to go all the way to Vegas anymore.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Apollo, 253 W. 125th St. (864-0372)—On Wednesdays, the theatre presents Amateur Night, a continuation of the legendary show that has launched the careers of such performers as Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Billie Holiday. Vocalists, dancers, musicians, and comedians participate. It's a chance to file away a memory for a later "I knew him/her when." Show time is seven-thirty.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up well in advance. Trumpeter **DIZZY GILLESPIE,** who emerged in the mid-forties with a wild, dense, billowing style and who helped Charlie Parker invent a thing called bebop, will be here Aug. 28-Sept. 2. The **TONY WILLIAMS** quintet and the **BILLY COBHAM** band begin work on Sept. 4. First set at nine. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. Through Sept. 1, the place belongs to a trio led by pianist **KENNY BARRON.** Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

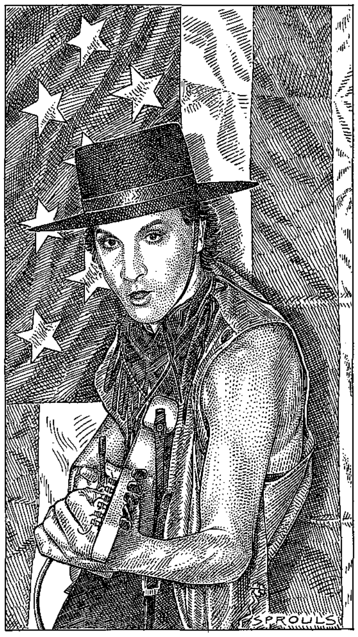
Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by such acts as Exiter and Sweet Cheetah, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. An older couple glides across the floor, lost in a nostalgic reverie; an eager young man, his tie loosened, his face perspiring, throws his date around like a crazed cossack. Sept. 2 belongs to the **BUCK CLAYTON** orchestra. Of his days playing trumpet for Billie Holiday, the tall, princely bandleader has said, "When we recorded, we had no idea that we'd be making history. . . . It was just a job, a gig. When Lady Day made a record, we just did it, then we'd go out to a bar and have a drink. I now find myself making arrangements for songs I did with Billie a long, long time ago." Music from eight to midnight.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A candlelit catacomb just east of Union Square. **CLIFFORD JORDAN,** a supple, unhurried tenor saxophonist whose eclectic sets mix standards and blues, leads a quintet here Aug. 28-Sept. 2. Trumpeter and flugelhornist **CLARK TERRY,** whose quartet starts up on Sept. 4, is a sly, light-footed musician who has been referred to as a "master of disruption." Not long ago, in the middle of one of his sets, someone remarked, "Been out here a long time, haven't you?" Terry's response was to rub his bald spot and say, "That's right! Wore out two sets of hair." Music after ten.

Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, posers, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. The motif is prehistoric punk—a Stone Age mural, assorted toy dinosaurs and pterodactyls—and on peak nights there's a "Take no prisoners" atmosphere. The singer and guitarist **SYLVAIN SYLVAIN,** who's here on Aug. 31, made his name as a New York Doll in the seventies and has since been a fixture on the local rock scene. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at ten, Fridays at midnight, and Saturdays at eleven.

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A tin-roofed, hubcap-awninged, soul-food-serving, chicken-shack theme bar. Exhibits include a rusted Orange Crush sign, a Pat Boone record jacket, bottle caps spelling out "Welcome," and other peckerwood flotsam. (If this place weren't a restaurant, it could be a flea market.) The clientele is mainly Northern urban. There's live music most nights, including gospel on Mondays and zydeco on Thursdays. Shows after nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which is reached by passing through a tight corridor where you half expect to bump into Admiral Nimitz. This is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy: at the front tables you can go eye to eye with your favorite performers, and no matter where you're seated there's not much room to practice your T'ai Chi. **RON CARTER**—a Michigan-born bassist who spent the sixties working with Thelonious Monk and Miles Davis and whose flawless technique can be heard on roughly a thousand albums—leads his nonet here Aug. 28-Sept. 2. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.



Sylvain Sylvain at Continental Divide

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—A satisfying combination of Chinese food and homegrown music. Rubberneckers may see the moon wheeling by the greenhouse roof on its regular tour of romantic Manhattan. The musicians who pass through here are among Gotham's finest. **MUNDELL LOWE** and **BUCKY PIZZARELLI** play duelling guitars Aug. 28-Sept. 2. Trombonist **AL GREY,** a longtime Basie-band star, works with guitarist Joe Cohn and bassist J. J. Wiggins beginning on Sept. 4. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

Gonzalez y Gonzalez, 625 Broadway, at Houston St. (473-8787)—Loud, brash, and big—de rigueur for the lower-Broadway dining scene. The theme is, of course, Mexican, and you get the whole enchilada—a giant cactus here, a parade-float sombrero there, animal skulls, religious artifacts, and chili-pepper clusters everywhere. The stage is in the rear, about a city block from the entrance.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark-wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass-figurine lamps. The musicians gather around the Steinway that sits in the dining room, but chin music is often the dominant sound. Pianist **VLADIMIR SHAFRANOV** and guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** will be in swing Aug. 28-Sept. 1. A piano-bass team consisting of **JUNIOR MANCE** and **MARTY RIVERA** can be heard as of Sept. 4. Music from nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. The Chicago-born guitarist **JEAN-PAUL BOURELLY,** who'll perform here on Aug. 31, came to New York about a decade ago and immediately fell in with the avant-garde. His music, the roots of which remain in Chicago blues, is funky and fierce. Music after nine.

Lauterbach's Brooklyn Beat, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—A grungy but well-intentioned watering hole devoted to homegrown Brooklyn bands. The emphasis here is on exposed cement, although one wall is decorated with Polaroids—"St. Patty's 1986" (people in green hats and leis), "New Year's 1988-89" (people in red hats and leis). Lauterbach's microwave menu includes shepherd's pie and chicken parmigiana, but the musical menu is almost always a better bet.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A Texan hangout where good old boys and Southern sorority girls mix with urban cowboys and those just looking. "Roadhouse" is an accurate description: it's a checked-tablecloth, long-necked-Bud, side-of-beef kind of place. **HANK BALLARD AND THE MIDNIGHTERS** perform on Sept. 1. Ballard was sort of the 2 Live Crew of the mid-fifties: many of his early R. & B. hits, such as "Annie Had a Baby," were banned from radio because of their explicit lyrics. Never a man to shun controversy, in 1974 Ballard recorded his song "Let's Go Streaking" in the nude. Music after nine.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A recent addition to the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. Aug. 28 belongs to the **HOLMES BROTHERS,** Aug. 29-30 to **JIMMY ROGERS,** and Aug. 31-Sept. 1 to the Hudson River Rats.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St., between Tenth and Eleventh Aves. (929-3257)—A Palladium-style venue on what is, at night, a more or less deserted block. Outside, there's an airplane diving into the roof; inside, there's some weird lighting and art, and about as many college kids as live in Boston. The sound system, which seems just right for records, is not so reliable when it comes to live acts. On a recent visit, in fact, the sound was so bad that one would have sworn there was an intern at the mixing board.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—The legends of Hoboken are many. Some of them are true: Sinatra did grow up here; in certain parts of town, the air does smell of Maxwell House coffee (although not for much longer). Some of the legends are iffy: Was the first game of baseball really played here? Does former Hüsker Dü chieftain Bob Mould actually live in Hoboken? (John Sayles, maybe, but *Bob Mould*?) At Maxwell's, which will carry on even when the Maxwell House factory closes its doors, in 1992, you won't find all the answers, but you will find bands, bands, and bands—sometimes as many as five a night. Singer-guitarist **JOHN DOE,** who'll perform here Sept. 1, is taking a vacation from X, the L.A. band whose album "Wild Gift" is considered by many to be America's finest contribution to punk. Doe's recently released solo album, "Meet John Doe," is a strong effort: there's a good deal of stomping, but there are some subdued moments, too.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes—has more of a country-club feel. Singer **BARBARA LEA** can currently be found here, in a program devoted to Lee Wiley, a singer who was popular in the nineteen-thirties. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. Closed Sundays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Howie Wyeth's ragtime trio is in on Mondays; Tuesdays are the property of **VINCE**

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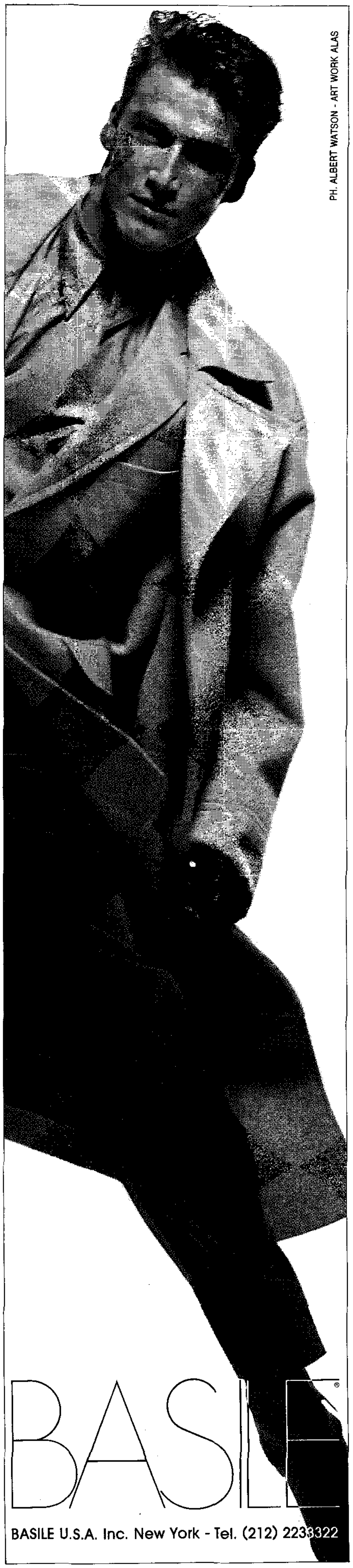

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS; Wednesdays feature the Stan Rubin band; Rick Hardeman and the Basin Street Six claim Fridays; and Bob Cantwell and His Stompers fill the Saturday slot. Music from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine on Fridays and Saturdays.

Savoy Grille, 131 E. 54th St. (593-8800)—A little nest off Lexington for young people on their way home from Madison. The restaurant and bar have a yellowish light that's easy on the eyes; a small dance floor, which love-struck patrons dash to between courses; and earnest waiters who stop just short of acting out the menu.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A big, cheerful room, painted a light tropical blue, where you can pick 'em up and set 'em down to sounds from Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Ample seating for the contemplative. Aug. 29-30: Tim Maia. Aug. 31: The Blue Ventures. Sept. 1: Ivory. Sept. 3: SISTER CAROL Unity 2, Shelly Thunder, the Skatalites, and Prince Buster. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Spo-dee-o-dee, 565 W. 23rd St., at Eleventh Ave. (206-1990)—A night club in a part of Chelsea the real-estate agents don't show you. It's a modest-sized space with a dance floor, a stage (there's live music seven nights a week), and a pell-mell décor: Victorian-style chandeliers, movie-theatre drapes, murals of Cotton Club-era dancers.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. NAT ADDERLEY'S very able sextet, which includes SONNY FORTUNE and WALTER BOOKER, among others, is in session through Sept. 2. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter Miles Evans is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Sweetwaters, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—Pink carnations on the tables, shrimp creole on the menu, and a sunken dance floor with a "Saturday Night Fever" ball. The stage, dominated by a white grand piano, is usually given over to soul and R. & B. acts. RAY, GOODMAN, AND BROWN, the vocal group who used to call themselves the Moments back in the late sixties and early seventies, when they had a string of R. & B. hits, perform Aug. 31-Sept. 1.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—This roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is a lot bigger and a lot slicker than the original Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. Loup Garou is here Aug. 31-Sept. 1.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room—which, with its black walls, black pillars, and black pipes and ducts, resembles a giant Louise Nevelson sculpture—salsa bands pack them in on Mondays. Aug. 27 brings in EL GRAN COMBO, RAY BARRETTO and his orchestra, and saxophonist CHICO FREEMAN. Sept. 3 belongs to Grupo Niche, a Colombian outfit; Orquesta de la Luz, from Japan; and violinist MICHAEL URBANIAK. . . . ¶ One flight up, in the airy space known as the Terrace Bar, pianist JUNIOR MANCE and bassist MARTY RIVERA work through Sept. 2. Sets nightly, except Monday, from ten.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." SOMETHING MORE, a quintet led by bassist BUSTER WILLIAMS, holds forth Aug. 28-Sept. 2, and the MINGUS DYNASTY BAND kicks off on Sept. 4. A big band formerly led by the late Mel Lewis holds sway on Mondays. Music after ten.

Wonderland, 519 2nd Ave., at 29th St. (213-5098)—When you're hungry for the blues, or just plain hungry. Andrew Cheshire performs Aug. 28-29. Pianist HILTON RUIZ leads an ensemble featuring percussionist DANIEL PONCE Aug. 30-Sept. 1. Shows Wednesdays and Thursdays at nine and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine, eleven, and one.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy, awninged eateries you've seen in the Village and always wondered about. JAMES WILLIAMS and BOB CRANSHAW will be here through Sept. 1. Music weeknights from eight, and Sundays from seven.

IN THE SWIM

The Asser Levy bathhouse was opened in 1908 to provide public bathing facilities for the poor immigrant families who lived in the East Twenties near the river—a neighborhood then known as the gashouse district, because of the giant gas tanks that loomed there. In the vicinity of the tanks was a terrible stench and thriving populations of vermin and hoodlums. The bathhouse was designed in the overly grand Roman-revival style, as if the city planners hoped that architectural pomp would vanquish human squalor. Once indoor plumbing became widespread, in the nineteen-thirties, the Parks Department assumed responsibility for the building, and now, with an eight-million-dollar face-lift, the bathhouse has regained its former grandeur but not its former purpose. It's a public gym (23rd Street and Avenue C; open daily from 11 to 7): a monument to recreationally minded Manhattanites. The indoor pool has been retiled, and the walls around it are now an ever-so-pale terra-cotta color. The outdoor pool has been rebuilt and, despite the fact that it butts up against an off-ramp from the F.D.R. Drive, looks clean and welcoming. The ballroom-size exercise room holds a few weight machines, several stationary bikes, and some rowing equipment. Even the locker rooms are nice.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

ON a balmy summer evening, three of us walked out of a lovely new restaurant called Métèque that had the misfortune to be located on Avenue C at Ninth Street. After wading through the chorus line of crack dealers on the street (who neither sing nor joke nor accost: they eye), we got into our rented car and turned west on Ninth. So did a white car behind us. When we came to Tompkins Square, we turned right, then left, then left, then right to get back onto Ninth. So did the white car. Could anyone be following us? we wondered. Nah. We were just being paranoid. But the vehicle was staying back that discreet distance that tailers used to stay back in Steve McQueen movies. Just to be sure, we continued on Ninth, crossed Second Avenue, doubled back down Stuyvesant Street, and returned to Second. So did the white car. We were spooked. Crack dealers had mistaken us for someone else and were going to get us. Could one of us accidentally have uttered a password when we walked by them? We stopped in front of Gem Spa to see if the white car would wait across the street. It did. We parked for what seemed like forever. It did, too. We were terrified. We waited until the light on Seventh had almost turned and then, gunning the engine, hung a right on two wheels and went tearing down the street in a cold sweat. Sure enough, the white car, now with its brights on, was flooring it right behind. After flying around Cooper Square, we tried to run the light on Eighth, but cars were already coming across the intersection. Suddenly, a flashing red light appeared in the white car's windshield, and three men in dark blue bolted from the car and surrounded ours with guns drawn and cocked. They were cops.

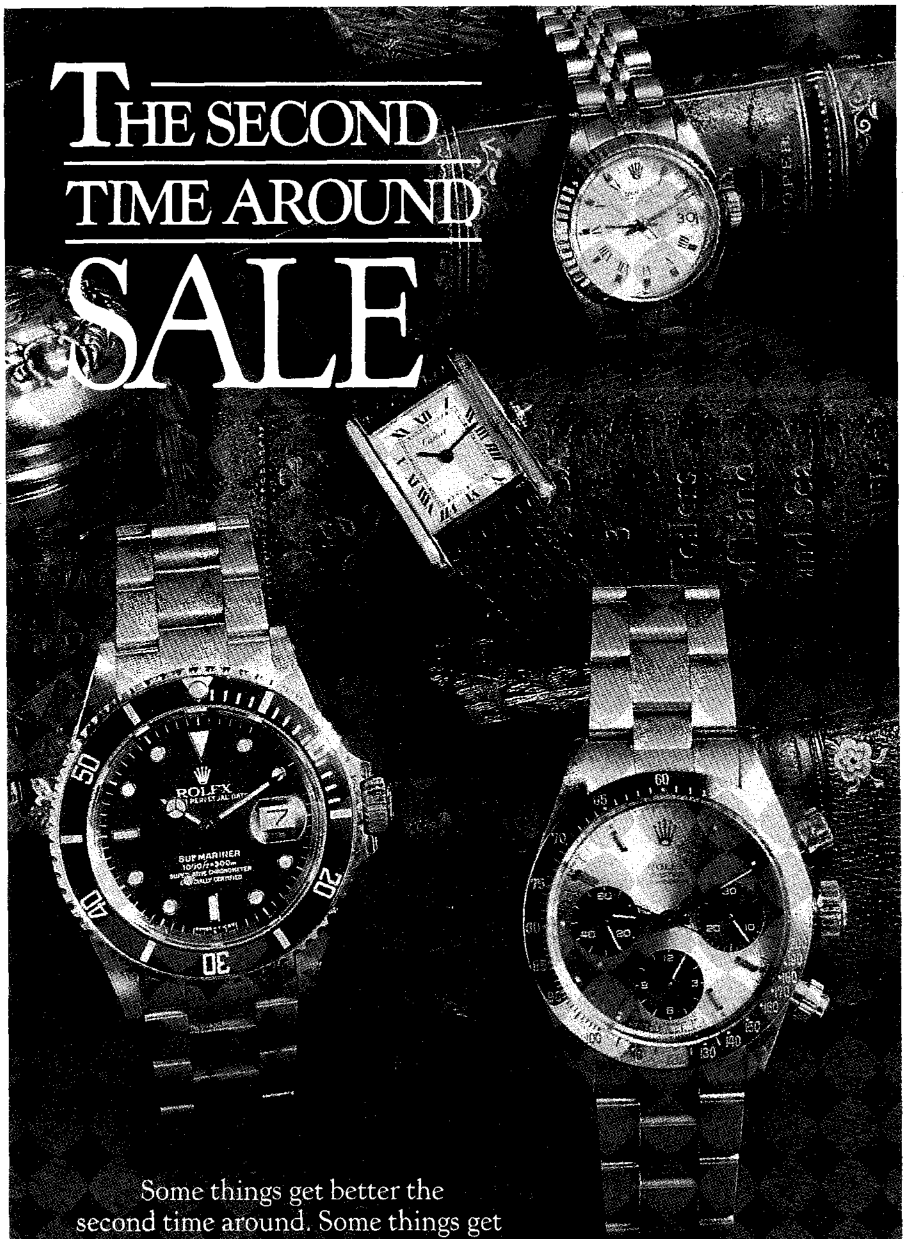
What had we done? Why were they harassing us? What was the point? They told us they couldn't understand why we'd be hanging around Avenue C unless we were up to no good. Are you kidding? we screamed. We were eating in a restaurant. Did they do this to all Mêtèque's patrons? What's with the suits? they asked. That's the way we dress for work. Yeah, doing what? Chalk up a writer, a jewelry designer, and a psychiatrist. Oh. The last profession unnerved them. They checked us out. They let us go. But not before giving us a ticket for not signalling before making our last run of terror. (The rented car's signal wasn't working, but we didn't know that at the time.) "You can't be too careful when people who don't look like they live in the neighborhood show up," said the man in blue who was driving.

We drove by Mêtèque last week. They're closed indefinitely. Lack of business. Little street traffic. But at least the crack dealers aren't on Avenue C and Ninth anymore. No one to eye. This is what must be known as cleaning up the neighborhood.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY

IF, like Penn & Teller, your taste in magic runs to sideshow sleaze and devilish pranks, then Jeff McBride may not be your coin-spewer. Penn & Teller look like insurance salesmen out to fleece you; McBride, with his white makeup, pursed lips, shoulder-length hair, and buccaneer garb, could double for Puss in Boots. A weakness for costumes shags him. In one bit, he subdues a giant mane made of red acrylic pile, then affixes it to his head and juts his neck from side to side; it's a Tina Turner/Kabuki meld that comes off overly emphatic. McBride fancies himself a sorcerer, and Jordan Rudes, the keyboardist with whom he shares the stage at the Ballroom, dubs himself a wizard—nomenclature that only Yoda could assume without withering audience confidence.

But past the hokum is entrancing showmanship. McBride, with sleeves pushed up, extrudes card after card from the air. Cards sprout from every fingertip like cabalistic tentacles, then pour from his mouth, as if a full deck had been sequestered inside his cheeks. In another sequence—best not to try this at home—live embers peek from behind his teeth, then burst into flame on his tongue. Sand turns to milk as it's poured. A gold feather is transformed into a wand. Graceful and illuminating passages punctuate the jaw-droppers. Flower petals become butterfly wings that flutter in the draft of a paper fan. There is nothing naïve about McBride's physical control—or the stirring concentration required to maintain it.



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IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—Cont'd

Penny Arcade—Also known as Susana Ventura, in the final performances of her one-woman show. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Aug. 30-Sept. 2 at 9:30.)

Jeff McBride—The Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. 244-3005. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 9, Fridays and Saturdays at 9 and 11, and Sundays at 3. Through Sept. 9.

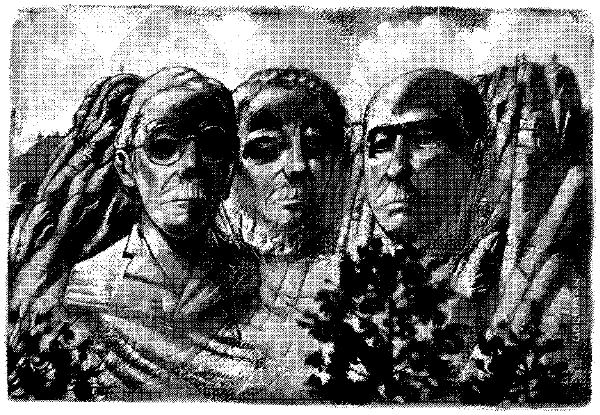
ART

Between 1962 and 1965, Ed Ruscha, with a bit of Oklahoma still in his system, drove around Los Angeles a lot soaking up its roadside vistas. Out of this experience came three rhapsodically deadpan artists' books—photographic inventories—that quickly became classics of that scrappy genre somewhere between the broadside and the édition de luxe. "Twentysix Gasoline Stations," "Every Building on the Sunset Strip," and "Some Los Angeles Apartments" were also avatars of a hybrid, Pop-minimalist style that would catch on much more widely in fiction than in the visual arts. Furthermore, they remain outstanding examples of the "Love Letter to L.A."—a formal category unto itself, usually composed, whatever the medium, of equal parts whimsy and rue.

The Whitney Museum is currently exhibiting ten grisaille drawings (never before shown as a group) called "Some Los Angeles Apartments," made in 1965 in conjunction with the book and based on its photographs. Ruscha is an artist who loves the look of graphics, and in these renderings of postwar residential buildings, such as the Bronson Tropics, the Normandie, and the Beverly Glen, you can see how meticulously he emulates the effects of airbrushing and other tricks. A little later, he started using gunpowder and vegetable extracts, among other substances, in his paintings to achieve a sort of organic-supergraphic look that has been compared to both Pre-Raphaelitism and science fiction. There is almost always a poetic absurdism to Ruscha's work. Here, it is the fact that these portraits of existing apartment houses look like architectural proposals that have come straight off the drawing board. They are drawn as if they were meant to convince a developer. It is both funny and touching that this artist could find such vast and untrammelled hope in response to a world that inspired someone else to create a "Day of the Locust."

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Art of Central Africa" is a dense and compact show drawn from the nineteenth-century holdings of the Museum für Völkerkunde, in Berlin, and includes some of the finest works known from Angola, the People's Republic of Congo, and southern Zaire. The range is quite extraordinary, but the strongest works are the "power figures," which were used for curing afflictions and for revenge. Each figure has an intense gaze, usually with its tongue sticking out of a rounded mouth, as if it were in some remote, drugged state. The most riveting figure is almost completely covered with fierce iron spikes, which were driven into it to unleash its powers. Through Nov. 4. . . . ¶ The concept of painting an illusionary scene on a two-dimensional surface has alway been dependent on the frame to establish the painting's world. The exhibition "Italian Renaissance Frames" brings the frames themselves to life, and demonstrates why at one time wood carving was considered a higher art than painting. Most of the frames are empty, and after a while the eye becomes so finely tuned to this delicate, often elaborate art that the occasional El Greco within may appear out of place. Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ In a concurrent show, fifty-five American frames from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are on view. Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ "Chess and Art." Perhaps Duchamp would have abandoned making art for the cerebral game of chess had he been the holder of this offbeat collection of fanciful chess sets. Included are chess pieces from various Middle Eastern cultures dating from the seventh century to the twelfth; a travelling set from nineteen-twenties Nigeria with a rollable board of hide; a particularly elaborate fourteenth-century European knight carved in walrus tusk in the form of St. George and the Dragon; and the famed "Crimean War" set from the mid-nineteenth century, with the white side representing the coalition against Russia, the major pieces being portraits of the various European and North African members of the alliance (the Russian aristocracy, ironically, are the reds). There is also a particularly surreal set from 1885, with owls, walruses, and bears, and Man Ray's enigmatic geometric sets, with their own understated surreal touch. . . . ¶ "Reflections of the Floating World," an exhibition of Japanese Edo Period (1603-1868) wood-block prints that deal with the reflective quality of mirrors and water. Included are works by Utamaro, Hokusai, and Hiroshige. Through Oct. 28. . . . ¶ More than sixty sets of clothing worn by children from the eighteenth century to the twentieth are on view in the Costume Institute. Through Sept. 9. . . . **Note:** The museum's roof garden is open (when the weather is fine), with a new lineup of twentieth-century sculptures and a sixty-five-foot shade-providing pergola. Through Oct. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)



Antonio Navia, Melquíades Rosario, and Jaime Suárez at Museo del Barrio

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—In the invigorating and unusually cogent exhibition "Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde" we are given vivid pictures of several Russias, utopian and pragmatic, that might have been. We also run across the Russia that was more or less decided on by Stalin, though never built with quite the grandiloquence of, say, a 1931 proposal by the team of Gelfreikh and Shchuko for a humongous and fortresslike "Palace of Soviets." In this vision, some of the more instantly recognizable, Byzantine-Gothic motifs of the Doges' Palace, in Venice, are amplified with such uncouth militarism as to suggest a new bureaucracy made up of bellowing, paper-shredding Vulcans. Through Sept. 4. . . . ¶ The "Artist's Choice" installation assembled by Ellsworth Kelly, titled "Fragmentation and the Single Form," has a kaleidoscopic, slow-motion feel. In a compact selection of great modernist works from the museum's collection, we follow the square as it tips to form a lozenge or breaks out into a hexagon, and as it shifts from painting to sculpture to photography, as well as from abstract to human significance. The selection includes Matisse's haunting "Rose Marble Table," of 1917 (one of the artist's most powerful meditations on presence and absence, positive and negative space), and also works by Cézanne, Picasso, Braque, Léger, Picabia, Arp, Malevich, Mondrian, Miró, Giacometti, Brancusi, Edward Weston ("Mexico, D.F. [Anita]," a famous 1925 dorsal nude), and of course Kelly himself. The surprise inclusions —Audubon's 1832 "Roseate Tern"; William Bell's "Perched Rock, Rocker Creek, Arizona," a photograph from 1872; and Kelly's own photographs of Gaudí's cracked-tile surfaces in Barcelona's Güell Palace—give an aerodynamic lift and curve to what might otherwise have been simply a brilliant set piece. Through Sept. 4. . . . ¶ "Matisse in Morocco." The belief is becoming more widespread that Matisse's greatness has been eclipsed by Picasso's because so many of the Frenchman's best works have been hidden away in Soviet museums. The case is persuasively argued by this wonderful display of paintings—close to half of them from the Pushkin and the Hermitage—and drawings that Matisse made during two trips to Morocco in 1912 and 1913. The so-called Moroccan Triptych is as sumptuous as painting gets, and all of the works are so rich that it's fortunate the show is lean and concise. Through Sept. 4. . . . ¶ "First Light." Printmaking is not a medium one would expect James Turrell to excel at, but this suite of twenty etchings is glorious. Each depicts a white "light" form—a triangle, a cube, a plane—floating in an otherwise darkened room, usually in a corner. The viewer is drawn to each form like a bug to light, and the effect is similar to that of the artist's sublime light environments. They recall the early corner paintings of Robert Moskowitz, but they are much more sensate. With their progression of shapes from print to print they are also reminiscent of the systemic drawings and prints of Sol LeWitt, although they are mysterious in a way LeWitt's never are. Through Nov. 13. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., will be open, free, on Friday and Saturday Aug. 31-Sept. 1, from 6 to 10, with musicians from the Juilliard School performing at 7:30. (The museum is open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Ten graphite drawings from 1965 by Ed Ruscha, related to his photography book from that year, "Some Los Angeles Apartments." Through Oct. 14. . . . ¶ If an artist's value were measured by his influence, Hans Hofmann (1880-1966) would certainly be among the most important of this century: he trained more young American hopefuls than anyone else. But one need only look at MOMA's current "Matisse in Morocco" show to realize that Hofmann was a fine but ultimately minor artist. He certainly knew how to paint, and there are many charmers in this meticulously arranged retrospective, along with a few great paintings—"Memoria in Aeternum" and "Song of the Nightingale" float to the top. But there's also a lot of well-balanced glop. Hofmann represents the beginning of the end for abstract painting, offering vision without ever being a visionary. In the long run he may be best remembered not as the mentor of Burgoyne Diller, Louise Nevelson, Alfred Jensen, and Helen Frankenthaler but as the dean of abstract painting, a teacher who transformed scores of unfocussed artists into competent ones by training them to make "good" compositions that "worked." Through Sept. 16. . . . ¶ "Maurice Prendergast (1858-1924)." A retrospective of more than a hundred oil paintings and watercolors by this popular artist and coörganizer of the legendary Armory Show demonstrates his ability to capture some very pretty moments of leisure with decorative mosaics of dabbed paint, but it also shows how he was trivialized by his own redundancy and overdependence upon tame Americana. Through Sept. 2. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A pleasant, didactically pointless show, in the "Curator's Choice" series, of fourteen watercolors by Winslow Homer and nineteen by John Singer Sargent. The importance of this medium to these turn-of-the-century American stars is well known. Also well known are their temperamental and stylistic differences. Homer was the rugged, plainspoken, Romantic naturalist, and Sargent the deft, cosmopolitan aesthete. Several individual works on view, however, are revealing in small ways. Homer's eighteen-eighties Bahamian pictures strongly suggest themes in early nineteen-eighties work by Eric Fischl, and Sargent's charming 1908 travel sketch "In Switzerland" paints a very pretty picture of how one tall American coped with a small Alpine bed. Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ Too little attention is given to installation art nowadays, but if this exhibition—the third in a series on artists working in Brooklyn—is an accurate representation, it's best left in obscurity. Much of the fifth floor of the museum has been converted into a sort of freak show, but one low on entertainment value. There are "pictures" that tell stories when you open their doors, paintings that emit music, works that light up, even a fountain that churns what looks like cherry-colored septic waste. The sometimes provocative collaborative group TODT is represented by a trite work, best described as a yucky post-industrial surgery center, complete with metal catwalks, X-rays of deformed children, and examining-room furniture that suggests torture. If you exit the show here, you will enter a display of American paintings, and face John Singer Sargent's "Portrait of Mrs. Hugh Hammersley," which depicts the kind of perfectly charmed leisure world that could very well have inspired TODT's horrific vision. The rosy-cheeked Mrs. Hammersley is poised in a red velvet gown on her satin davenport, fresh as the moment she arrived for her sitting. The artist's brush is at its most animated, with each stroke serving a purpose. For all its age and tradition the portrait is fresher than any of the installation work behind it. Through Oct. 15. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Shortly after King Leopold II of Belgium was forced to end his rampage through the inappropriately named Congo Free State—today's Zaire—this museum mounted an expedition through that vast area which employed thirty-eight thousand porters and lasted from 1909 to 1915. The travellers brought back fifty-four tons of collectibles, most notably the rare animals that continue to grace the dioramas in the Akeley Hall of African Mammals. This show is primarily made up of objects relating to the expedition and accumulated from the Mangbetu people of what is now northeastern Zaire: musical instruments with highly inventive figurative carvings; photographs of people with outrageous hats and hairdos; books such as "The Curse of Central Africa," from 1903, by Captain Guy Burrows; sculptures with Brancusiesque faces that should inspire further rethinking of the history of abstraction; and numerous pieces that display colonial references, including gourds carved with images of armed soldiers. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 9.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Twenty-four custom-built doghouses by contemporary architects and designers are on view in the museum's garden. There are doghouses made of bones, rawhide dog chews, and, in one case, an old television console with "Lassie Come Home" stencilled on its empty screen. Through Oct. 14. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto" is an exhibition of eighty-five photographs taken in September, 1941, by German Army sergeant Heinz Jöst. Through Nov. 1. . . . ¶ A show of ten paintings and drawings, and a contemporary interpretation of a sukkah, or improvised shelter, by the artist Eli Content. Through Nov. 1. . . . ¶ "Why I Got Into TV and Other Sto-

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ries," a retrospective of photographs, videotapes, and audio works by the California artist Ilene Segalove. Through Nov. 1. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Jacques Marchais Center of Tibetan Art, 338 Lighthouse Ave., Staten Island—Jacqueline Norman Klauber was one of those great, eccentric travellers who steep themselves in a place without ever going there. Under the name Jacques Marchais, she amassed a very good collection of Tibetan art, and to house it she built a structure resembling a Tibetan mountain temple, with an acoustic-tile ceiling and rustic New York State fieldstone. It's one of New York's sweeter museums, located in a quiet hillside neighborhood on Staten Island and surrounded by a modest terraced garden. Marchais, a Midwesterner, took her Tibet seriously. "According to Buddhist law," one wall label explains, "a monk's vow can be taken when a child is old enough to scare a crow." She filled an altar and several display cases with ritualistic objects, sculptures of various deities, and portrait statues of lamas, most of it less than a few hundred years old. There is a curious collection of eleven silver implements used by the Sixth Panchen Lama to perform a fire ceremony, a set of wood purgatory guardian figures, some elaborate cups made of human skulls, and several aprons carved from human bones. Through Nov. 25. (Wednesdays through Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museo del Barrio—In a show of works by mid-career Puerto Rican sculptors, Melquíades Rosario, the youngest, is by far the most compelling. His sculptures—of raw and smoothed wood and, to a lesser extent, concrete and stone—are very modernistic and lyrical, somewhat in the organic spirit of Louise Bourgeois's work. Antonio Navia's delicate and precisely constructed pieces are reminiscent of intricate ship models and electronic instruments. Also on display are several ceramic works by Jaime Suárez. Through Oct. 14. . . . ¶ "Art Underground: A Public Art Project by Nitza Tufiño," a show of drawings, ceramic decorations, and two murals to be installed in the subway station at 103rd Street and Lexington Avenue this fall. The work is far less inspirational than the ceramic-tile decorations for the Broadway-and-86th-Street station that the artist did in collaboration with twelve secondary-school students. Through Sept. 16. (1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th St. Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—Twenty-eight watercolors and two oil paintings by the nineteenth-century folk artist Jacob Maentel. Through Sept. 3. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—An exhibit devoted to Portugal's pioneering maritime exploration, notably of Brazil, and its impact on European culture. Maps, treaties, and navigational instruments from the mid-fifteenth century to the late sixteenth are on display, along with manuscripts, letters, and paintings. Through Sept. 1. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Sundays and Labor Day, 10 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Road, Long Island City—Noguchi (1904-88), one of the twentieth century's singular talents, designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his sculptures. It contains a wide range of his work—from the early surrealistic biomorphic sculptures to several types of stone carvings—and documentation of his prodigious public art. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful, ivy-walled garden dotted with the artist's works. Through Nov. 28. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. They will be closed Labor Day.)

Michael Kidner—A latter-day Constructivist whose work is generated by systems governing algebraic permutations and the "optics of color." Kidner is a quiet, academic artist, but he has a nice, plummy, boatman's or carpenter's sense of materials, particularly wood and string. "The Net (From Mies van der Rohe to Freiburg Cathedral)," a 1987 movable wall construction made of elastic, wood, hooks, and steel rings, is arguably the pièce de résistance. It suggests a platform-tennis court deconstructed by a mercurial and romantic ball boy. Here, as elsewhere, we are met with an impeccable nonobjective literalism. Through Oct. 20. (Center for International Contemporary Arts, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

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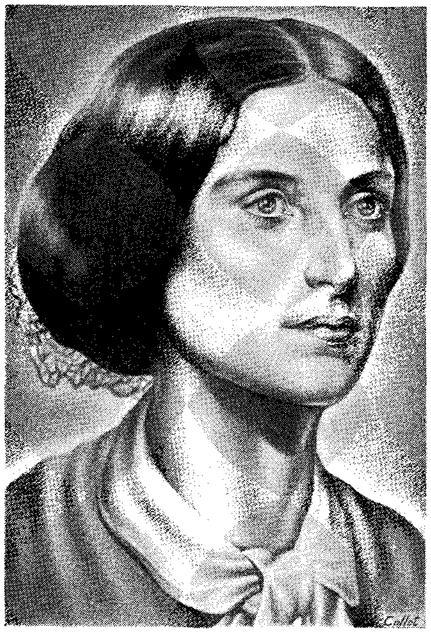


Lady Clementina Hawarden

"Rediscovering Pompeii"—The mood of this show of recent excavations is fascinating and bizarre. Viewers in the darkened rooms of the main exhibition space are greeted by a recessed circular pit containing a "Woman from Oplontis," whose painfully contorted remains are cast in resin. Among the many gorgeous and refined objects here is the dazzling "Bronze Hand from the Cult of Sabazius." It not only rivals Donatello but serves as one of the very few overt examples of the Pompeians' focus on sex—their unabashed and very famous erotica was a cornerstone of daily life. This fact is discreetly mentioned in the exhibition, yet only Sabazius' busy hand and one Augustine phallus, it seems, were considered fit for our eyes in this age. Through Sept. 15. (I.B.M. Gallery of Science and Art, Madison Ave. at 56th St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

"Detritus"—A show of work in mixed mediums by twelve artists that addresses what is perhaps *the* subject of the year. Unfortunately, the treatment is a bit, well, spotty. There are some glaring omissions, such as Cady Noland's lyrical trash assemblages, and a couple of tired inclusions, such as one of Bruce Nauman's over-familiar waxen "Skinned Cats." But looking at a summer show with an ambitious theme often means having to take what can be got, and we do get Tony Cragg, a brilliant old hand at garbage if there ever was one, along with promising young rag-pickers like Jessica Stockholder—represented here by two-by-fours sporting wigs and newsprint—and Curtis Mitchell, whose piece consists of a distressed-velvet drape with a stain. Also on view are Alan Belcher's very direct "Spit on Mink," Georg Herold's ethereally icky "Caviar Painting," Matthew McCaslin's site-specific plumbing-pipe construction, Kevin Carter's faux mummy, and one of Petah Coyne's brooding, mutant hornets' nests. Through Aug. 31. (Tilton, 24 W. 57th St.)

Group Shows—At **Galerie St. Etienne,** 24 W. 57th St.: Recent gallery acquisitions by Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, George Grosz, Max Klinger, Käthe Kollwitz, various Wiener Werkstätte artists, and the redoubtable Sue Coe. Seeing Coe in proximity to Kollwitz is especially interesting. They are nearly exact opposites, though both aim for essentially the same expressionistic, empathic, and incriminating effects. Where Kollwitz distills all sorrows into "universal," quasi-ecclesiastical images—bereft mothers, workworn hands—Coe hits our collective jugular through the journalistic precision of her slaughterhouse scenes and the fierce theatrics of her allegories, which are always of highly specific evils. Through Aug. 31. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **Marian Goodman,** 24 W. 57th St.: A handsome show of gallery artists and a few others. Many of the pieces have a surrealistic edge: Claes Oldenburg's sculpture of a heel yanked from a shoe; Rebecca Horn's contraption that dusts a pair of nipple-soled sneakers with pink face powder; Richard Artschwager's Formica-and-metal quasi-musical instrument; newcomer Juan Muñoz's bronze lady in a bowl with podlike arms and brass-bell hands; and even Giuseppe Penone's bronze leaves pressed between wood branches. But other qualities are evident as well. Lothar Baumgarten's installation is a touching but tricky portrait of the railroads that helped shape this country and annihilate the native population in the process, and Thomas Struth's magnetic photograph of a conservator at work in a Naples cathedral manages to be both documentary and operatic. Through Aug. 31. . . . **Mc Coy,** 41 E. 57th St.: A crisp and quirky glimpse of work by four very different painters who are not necessarily what they seem. The inspired and rather maniacal Mike Bidlo, best known for his impeccably "forged" Pollocks and Picassos, is represented here by one early and one very late de Chirico—so late, in fact, that it suggests early-eighties East Village art. Jane Kaplowitz, too, is known for anxious modernist reprises, most recently seen in a 1988 show of very intelligent and offbeat cartoons, but now she has broken through to the more insouciant realm of . . . wallpaper borders! Her big painting is of a blown-up bird-with-nest repeat—delivered faithfully, in soft decorator colors—but it also seems to be a sort of reductio ad absurdum, kinda rueful and kinda sweet, on the theme of motherhood. I. Rice Pereira's painting is an abstract tossup of dippiness and acidity, geometry and wooziness—a deadpan echo of the Whitney's Hans Hofmann show. And Rob Wynne, the abstract painter who (along with Kaplowitz) organized this endearingly neurotic exhibition, is by inclination a romantic but seems to mistrust the repercussions of overt romanticism on a contemporary audience. His two snappy paintings have a bright polka-dot façade, but in their drips we may think we're seeing the tracks of their tears. These artists all play it cool and matter of fact, but something hotter and stranger lurks beneath their accomplished surfaces: they may all be closet Pagliaccis. Through Sept. 15.

GALLERIES—SoHo

Christopher Wool—Large paintings on paper, of either a Penckian phoenix or what might be described as a black putto done in the racist style of thirties Hollywood movies. The two images are arranged in various combinations—singly, in pairs, as friezes. The paintings are smart-ass, cynical works about the state of originality and the role of the artist in today's art world, but they are also surprisingly penetrating and pack a hard punch. Through Sept. 12. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

Group Shows—At **Pace,** 142 Greene St.: It looks like the Pace gallery opened its grand SoHo space just in the nick of time. Practically everything here is about scale; even a large Nevelson looks humble in this context. A huge Serra angled-wedge drawing in oil stick is both heroic and resistant to a heroic reading. A soft version of a painted steel sculpture by Oldenburg, envisioned here in a fallen state—it seems to have been wrenched from the ground—is loaded with pathos and expresses the uprooting of patriarchal authority. Condo delivers an amusing if unintentional recapitulation of modern Spanish painting, with a portrait of Krazy Kat thrown in. And Ryman is represented by a fine multipanelled work seen at auction last year in a damaged state but here looking real cool. Through Aug. 31. . . . **WEBER,** 142 Greene St.: Especially notable in this handsome show are a sheltering fabric-and-wood wall construction by Franz Erhard Walther that follows in the medical/shamanistic line of Beuys; two 1966 stripe paintings by the elegant, subversive Daniel Buren; two expressionistic wood sculptures by Mel Kendrick; and two walls full of the shiny, black-centered painted plaster surrogates of Allan McCollum, which walk the line between ennui and magic with intelligence, wit, and concision. Through Aug. 31.

OTHER VENUES

THE ANCHORAGE—The artists exhibiting this summer in New York's most dramatic space for contemporary art, the vaulted brick anchorage beneath the Brooklyn Bridge, take very seriously the various indications that our golden society is falling apart. As usual, the quality is uneven, and some things look much better than they actually are. There is an overabundance of sound installations with echoing voices and low-level, mood-evoking blue lights. (One includes the spoken text "We are the names of time. To talk is human.") But there are also some very affecting works. Jim Goldberg has constructed a full-size house of the picket-fence variety; on its exterior he has projected slides of homeless youths and their drawings, which describe in documentary detail the squalor, danger, and isolation in which they live. Nancy Rubins has erected a personal public monument, a memorial to a collaborator who died recently of AIDS. It is a massive piece that is composed of a huge dead oak tree and sixty thousand pounds of rubble from a sculpture they constructed together, most of it contained now in sealed metal cases. In a simple, stark sound show, Jerri Allyn makes such commonsense statements as "Jasper Johns sells in the millions, paintings with defaced flag use" and "Wouldn't you love to hear Rohrabacher tell us why Courbet's rollicking, and decidedly lesbian-looking, women are glorious?," and repeatedly wonders what it would take to "get the sixty per cent we rarely hear from to write to their Senate and their Congress" in support of freedom of speech and the N.E.A. Through Oct. 7. (Cadman Plaza West at Front St., Brooklyn. Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

SNUG HARBOR CULTURAL CENTER, 1000 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island—The 1990 sculpture festival features the usual range of lacklustre, uninspired public art on these otherwise splendid grounds. Some of the drearier works are a multipart "environmental" piece in which an artist has placed binoculars in various locales to "frame" the landscape, and the grandly titled "Nectar for Neptune," in which a tree has been rigged so that it splatters an old fountain with a piddle of water. Some works are better, however. Kit-Yin Snyder has constructed a more fitting tribute to the site and the gods with an outdoor structure in the form of the Temple of Jupiter, at Pompeii. It echoes the five magnificent Greek Revival structures of Snug Harbor, and is made out of young evergreens and shallow reflecting pools. It's a shame this is only a temporary work. Down a dirt road worthy of Stephen King, past crumbling iron fences that are now home to occasional passages of satanic graffiti, Jeff Spaulding has arranged a number of dead trees in mock voodoo rituals, including a particularly violent cluster featuring Christmas trees that died without ever being unbound. Through Oct. 28. (Open daily, including Labor Day, dawn to dusk.) . . . ¶ At the Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art, on the grounds of the cultural center: "Family Stories," a show of autobiographical art works in many shapes and sizes. Almost all of them are embarrassingly bad. Among the few exceptions are the large black-and-white staged family photographs of Nic Nicosia, and the documentary photographs of immigrant and native Chinese communities by Pok-Chi Lau. There are also some large, poignant, and dignified drawings by Whitfield Lovell of such familialia as a literal family tree, which seems to have been inspired by Hispanic folk portraiture. Through Sept. 23. (Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

THE Weston show at the uptown branch of the International Center of Photography is wonderful. The quality of the prints is superb, and their scale is a lesson in modesty. Made up of portraits and nudes taken by Weston from 1914 to 1945, this abundant show gives us a chance to absorb the work of a photographer who knew how to use the camera in the service of intimacy. We were ready to be impressed by this aspect of Weston's photography because he has always exemplified the absence of prurience—an absence most obvious in his nudes, which are powerfully sensual, yet never commercial. What we didn't expect, though, is the social commentary and dry wit that are so apparent in his later, less gorgeous work. There's a 1945 photograph, for instance, in which a nude is "dressed" by a leaf—it's an image that seems to be slyly commenting on the culture's fear of nakedness; a picture that continues to resound, forty-five years after it was taken, in today's climate of censorship. Looking at the show, we were thinking how the naturalness and beauty of Weston's nudes make mincemeat of all artificial rules about editing the naked body out of art when we overheard a lady espousing yet another rule. "Not enough shadows," she said with authority, about a picture that is such a song to the sun and its light, it makes one warm.

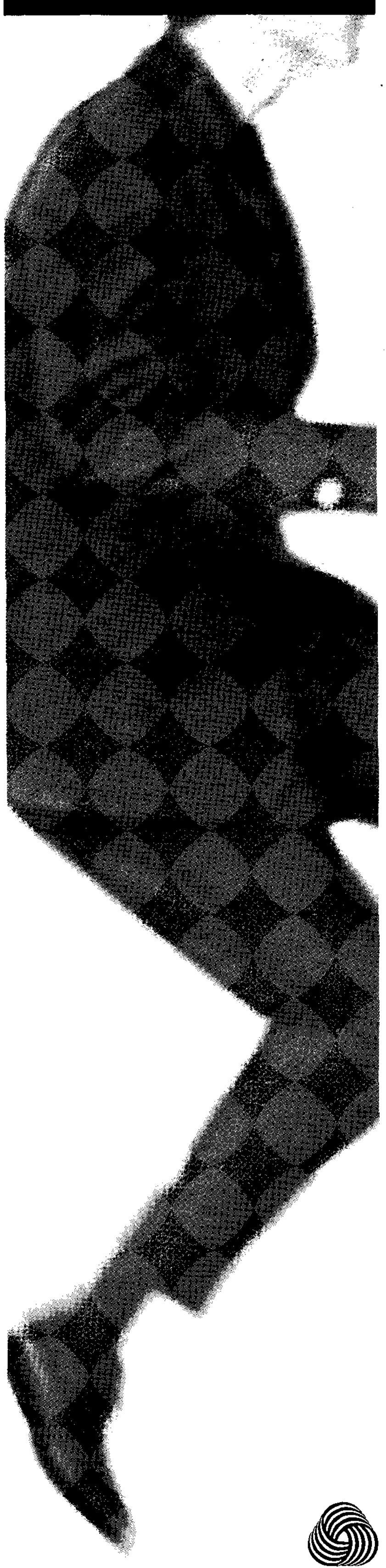
PATRICK FAIGENBAUM / SUZANNE LAFONT—Intriguingly stiff and rather plain black-and-white photographs of Italian aristocrats, posing in their homes full of incredible art, furniture, and decorative splendor. Old World in every sense. / Multipanelled black-and-white pieces combining closeup profiles of various faces. They're cinematic and photographic all at once—in a certain way, they're like New Wave mug shots. Through Sept. 7. (Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. Closes at 4 on Fridays.)

LADY CLEMENTINA HAWARDEN (1823-65)—Lady Hawarden is no longer a delicious secret, now that an exhibition of her Victorian photographs has been organized. She treats her female subjects with unparalleled grace: she wraps them with light, she reflects them in mirrors, she presents them as embodiments of soul, isolating this sense of exquisite internal life in interiors that are pregnant with aura. This is work of astounding subtlety and beauty. Through Oct. 9. (Museum of Modern Art.)

FÉLIX TEYNARD (1817-92)—The Met has mounted a passionate show of thirty-five primarily architectural views of Egypt taken from 1851 to 1852 by this French civil engineer. At the time, each photograph was still an almost miraculous event, and in these pictures you can feel how everything counted, how nothing about the process was taken for granted. The salted paper Teynard used has a marvellous delicacy compared with today's slicker, thicker papers, and it contributes to the over-all sense of awe and achievement. An ironic feature of this show is the inclusion of Teynard's photo of the Temple of Dendur—the very same monument that is now on view in the Museum's Sackler wing. Through Sept. 9. (Metropolitan Museum.)

SHORT LIST—**MARILYN BRIDGES,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8, through Sept. 2); **LINNAEUS TRIPE** and **SUZANNE OPTON,** Lowinsky, 584 Broadway (closed Mondays, open Saturdays, through Aug. 31); **EDWARD WESTON** and **ARNOLD EAGLE,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through Sept. 9).

ROMEO GIGLI



PURE WOOL
BERGDORF GOODMAN

MUSIC

THERE are signs that the French are becoming interested in French music. The latest manifestation of this unexpected development is an ongoing series of compact disks published by Erato in coöperation with Radio France, called "MusiFrance" and subtitled "Cinq Siècles de Musique Française." The series already includes a substantial list of contemporary music, chamber music, symphonic works, and no fewer than five rare and important French operas.

Of course we exaggerate when we suggest that French musicians are ordinarily indifferent to their own music. But it is true that, to an unparalleled degree, the French national repertory and national school of performance collapsed, evaporated, or withered during the years between the First World War and the nineteen-fifties. During the seventy-five or hundred years before that time, Paris exported its share or more of the world's concert and operatic repertory, virtuosos, singers, etc., and at home preferred local products to imports on the whole. Since then, notwithstanding the liveliness of the interwar compositional scene and the centrality of Boulanger, Messiaen, and Boulez as teachers, France seemed to lose much more than other nations in the onrush of musical internationalization: its characteristic orchestral sound; its ability to produce credible operatic singers; its interest in those parts of the French repertory that had not already become "international."

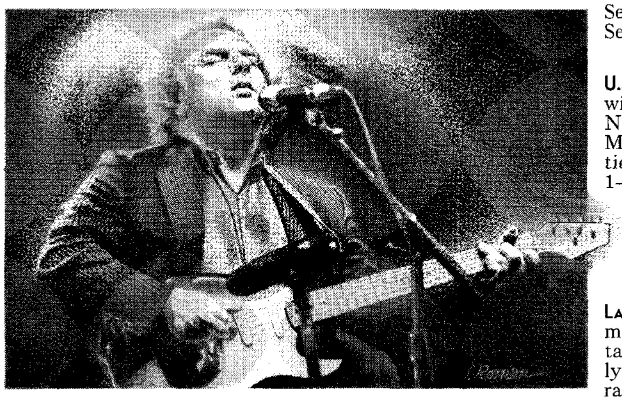
So it is particularly interesting to see that "MusiFrance" not only has recorded Campra's "Tancrède," Gluck's "Iphigénie en Aulide," Lalo's "Le Roi d'Ys," and Meyerbeer's "Les Huguenots" but also has cast French singers prominently in each. Not in all the roles, not even in a majority: that would be unthinkably radical and probably impossible without accepting gravely reduced standards. But it is a step in a good direction.

We confess that the "MusiFrance" performances, especially in "Les Huguenots," are not all that we hoped for, but there are stirring and pleasurable moments in each, and some are quite worthy. Among the non-operatic items are Charpentier's original incidental music to "Le Malade Imaginaire," fine symphonies of Méhul, all of Fauré's piano music, and a collection of Revolutionary hymns. The disks are distributed in the United States by Elektra International Classics.

New York City Opera—**FROM THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD,** a new production by Rhoda Levine of Janáček's opera, in English (with supertitles), with John Absalom, Jon Garrison, Eugene Perry, Harlan Foss, and John Calvin West; conducted by Christopher Keene. (Aug. 28 at 8, Sept. 2 at 2, and Sept. 5 at 8.) . . . **CARMEN,** with Sharon Graham, Michele Boucher, Brian Hilt, and Dean Peterson; Hal France. (Aug. 29 at 8 and Sept. 1 at 2.) . . . With Susanne Marsee, Stephanie Friede, Fabio Armiliato, and Dean Peterson; Hal France. (Sept. 4 at 8.) . . . **LE NOZZE DI FIGARO,** with Maureen O'Flynn, Madelyn Monti, Helene Schneiderman, Herbert Perry, and Kenneth Shaw; Scott Bergeson. (Aug. 31 at 8.) . . . **TOSCA,** with Edith Davis, Stefano Algieri, and Harry Dworchak; Louis Salemno. (Sept. 1 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

American Soviet Youth Orchestra Chamber Ensemble—In the only New York appearance of their 1990 tour, twenty members of this cultural-exchange effort (sponsored jointly by the Oberlin College Conservatory and the Moscow State Conservatory) perform music by Rossini (his Octet), Vivaldi (selections from "The Four Seasons"), and others. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center. Aug. 29 at 12:15. No tickets necessary.)

Bargemusic—A chamber ensemble, including clarinettist David Shifrin, plays Mozart, Mendelssohn, Stravinsky, and Piston. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Aug. 30-31 at 7:30 and Sept. 2 at 4.)

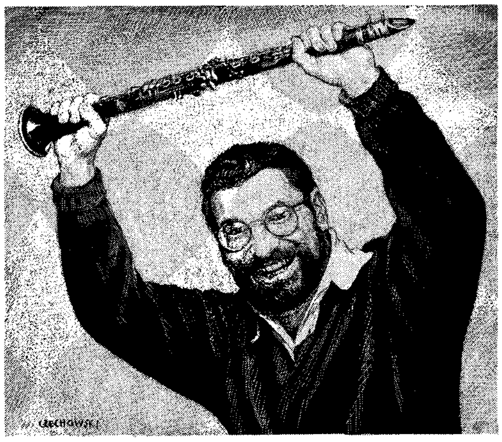


Van Morrison at Jones Beach

Naumberg Orchestra—Jens Nygaard conducts an all-Brahms concert: the "Academic Festival Overture," "Variations on a Theme of Haydn," and the Violin Concerto, with Daniel Heifetz. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. Sept. 1 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Janet Jackson—On her new album, the swinging nasty girl has turned into a socially conscious woman, and her music has become stiff and formulaic (the uniforms and unison dancing in her latest videos don't help, either). (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 422-9222. Aug. 28 at 8. . . . ¶ Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Aug. 30 at 8.)



David Shifrin at Bargemusic

Salsa and Merengue Concerts—Selected concerts from a series that will be on for about three weeks. Aug. 29 at 9:30: Tito Puente and his big band. (M.K., 204 Fifth Ave., at 25th St. 779-1340.) . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 9: Grupo Niche, the New York Band, and Ray de la Paz. (Palladium, 126 E. 14th St. 473-7171.) . . . ¶ Sept. 2 at 7: Celia Cruz, Ray Barretto, Willie Colon, Papo Lucca, Bobby Valentin, and many others. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the San Diego Padres, Aug. 28-29 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the San Francisco Giants, Aug. 30-31 at 7:30 and Sept. 1-2 at 1:35.

Yankees—Vs. the California Angels, Sept. 3 at 4 and Sept. 5-6 at 7:30.

(Home base for the Mets is Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and for the Yankees, Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1, starting Aug. 29. The Gazelle Handicap is on Aug. 29, the Maskette is on Sept. 2, and the Jerome Handicap is on Sept. 3. . . . At the Meadowlands: Sept. 3 at 1:30; weeknights at 7:30 starting Sept. 4. . . . At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Aug. 27-Sept. 1 at 1:30. . . . At the Atlantic City Race Course: Aug. 27 and Aug. 29-Sept. 1 at 7:25. . . . **TROTTING** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Mondays, except Sept. 3, through Saturdays at 7:45; Sept. 3 at 1:15.

TENNIS

U.S. Open—The best players in the world will be on the courts at the U.S.T.A. National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadow, Aug. 27-Sept. 9. For information about match times and tickets, call 1-718 271-5100.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Labor Day—The unofficial end of summer (Sept. 3), when working stiffs can take a load off and celebrate. In Brooklyn, the West Indian-American Day parade (along Eastern Parkway from Utica Avenue to Grand Army Plaza) starts at noon. Calypso and reggae bands, Caribbean food, and icy drinks add flair and flavor to the noisy gathering. For more information, call 1-718 774-8807. . . . ¶ The Washington Square Outdoor Art Exhibit has become a Labor Day weekend tradition (Sept. 1-3 and Sept. 7-8, from noon until sundown). More than three hundred artists and craftspeople will be exhibiting this year, and more than a hundred prizes will be awarded. . . . ¶ The Autumn Crafts Festival at Lincoln Center's Fordham University Plaza will take place Sept. 1-3. On Sept. 1 at 1:30, a sheep-shearing demonstration will be the highlight of the afternoon. . . . ¶ Judy Collins appears at the South Street Seaport on Sept. 3 at 6:30. No tickets are necessary.

"Great Jazz on the Great Hill"—A concert commemorating Charlie Parker, with Max Roach and the Lou Donaldson quintet. (Central Park, at W. 106th St. Aug. 28 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Jones Beach Theatre—Aug. 28: Anita Baker. . . . ¶ Aug. 30: Linda Ronstadt. . . . ¶ Aug. 31: The Allman Brothers. . . . ¶ Sept 1: **BRUCE HORNSBY AND THE RANGE.** Bruce Hornsby is a VH-1 kind of a guy—he plays mid-tempo, mid-life, middle-of-the-road, middle-of-the-eighties rock. His signature sound is based on the new-age prettiness of his piano style and the molasses-thick Virginia drawl with which he sings his socially conscious songs. (Hornsby was given the Grammy for Best New Artist of 1986 on the strength of his mellow denunciation of racism, "The Way It Is," which was a huge hit.) You never know where he's going to pop up, Zelig-like, next; later this month, he'll be temporarily playing keyboards with the Grateful Dead; a dinner conversation with Senator Bill Bradley inspired an environmental protest song on his new album, "A Night on the Town." As a rocker, he's no Jerry Lee Lewis, but Hornsby and his band have developed into an accomplished arena act, and some of his songs are a lot finer than his formula. . . . ¶ Sept. 2: **VAN MORRISON.** A golden opportunity to listen to the reigning lion of Celtic soul music. Born in Belfast, Morrison is the originator of the rough, romantic, lost-in-America-with-my-baby sound that Springsteen and Seger popularized with their anthems. But you may find that the legendary Morrison is sweeter, bluer, tried and truer. . . . ¶ Sept. 3: Kenny G and Michael Bolton. (Evenings at 8. 1-516 221-1000.)

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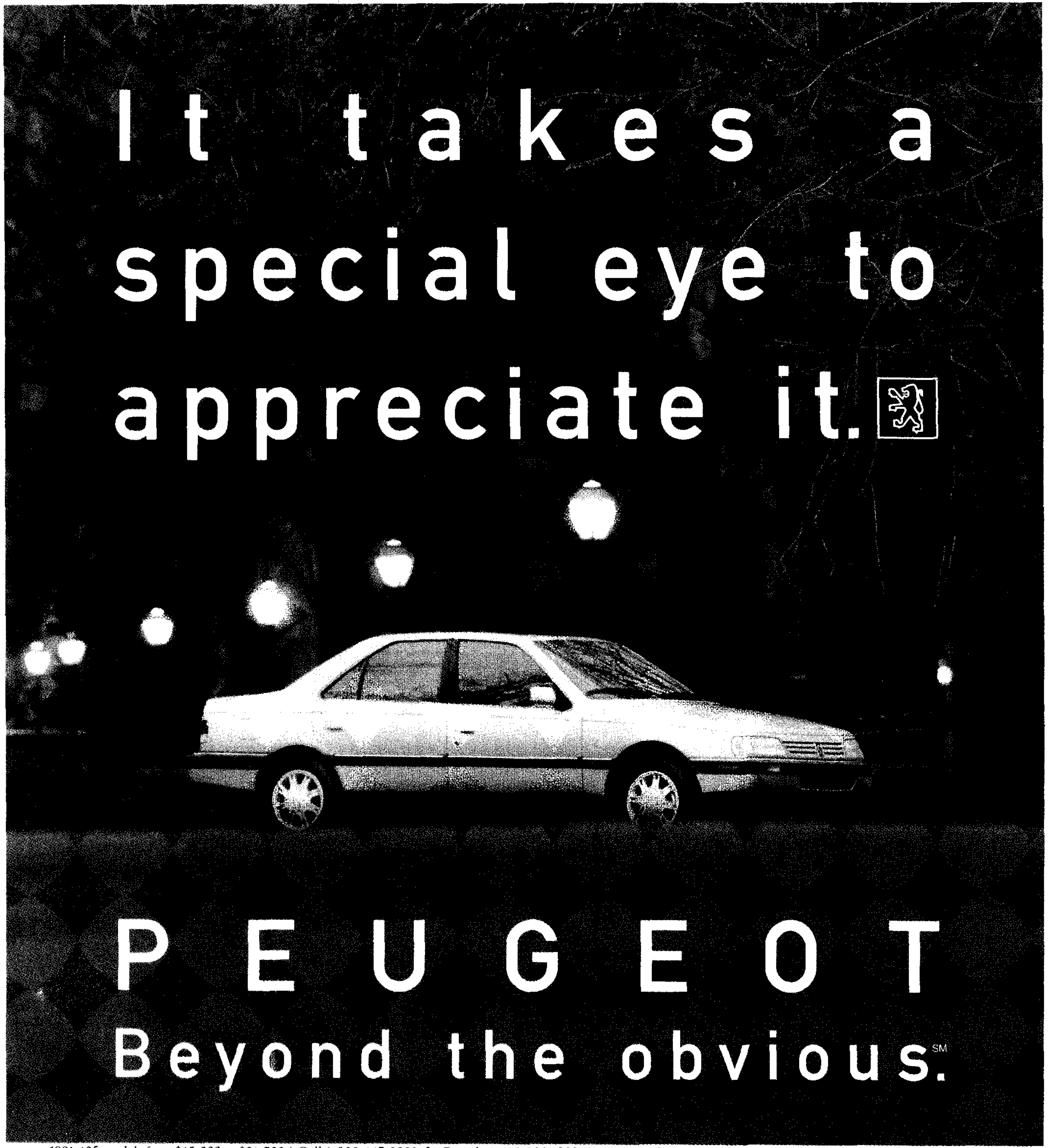

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 24.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "The Two Jakes" (†).
Theatre 2: "After Dark, My Sweet" (directed by James Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern.
Theatre 3: "The Unbelievable Truth" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke, Adrienne Shelly, and Christopher Cooke.
Theatre 4: "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater.
Theatre 5: "Wild at Heart" (†).
Theatre 6: "Wild at Heart" (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Aug. 30: A festival of documentary and short films from Latin America.
From Aug. 31: "Red Desert" (1964, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti and Richard Harris.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "The Freshman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 3: "My Blue Heaven" (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack.

Zero Mostel in "The Producers"

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"Mo' Better Blues" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Freshman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Air America" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Mel Gibson and Robert Downey, Jr.
Theatre 3: "Ghost" (†).
Theatre 4: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Two Jakes" (†).
Theatre 6: "Delta Force 2" (Aaron Norris), with Chuck Norris.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Taking Care of Business" (Arthur Hiller), with James Belushi, Charles Grodin, Anne DeSalvo, and Mako.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"The Exorcist III" (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, and Scott Wilson.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Ghost" (†).
Theatre 2: "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis, Scott Paulin, Ellen Greene, Mimi Kennedy, and Annie Ross.
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 30: "The Two Jakes" (†). From Aug. 31: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, Kathryn Grody, and Elliott Gould.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Presumed Innocent" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Witches" (Nicolas Roeg), with Anjelica Huston.

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "My Blue Heaven" (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack.
Theatre 2: "Men at Work" (Emilio Estevez), with Charlie Sheen and Estevez.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The Sound of Music" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"After Dark, My Sweet" (James Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "The Exorcist III" (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, and Scott Wilson.
Theatre 2: "Darkman" (Sam Raimi), with Liam Neeson, Frances McDormand, Colin Friels, and Larry Drake.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 30: "Mo' Better Blues" (†). From Aug. 31: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 2: "Taking Care of Business" (Arthur Hiller), with James Belushi, Charles Grodin, Anne DeSalvo, and Mako.
Theatre 3: "Bye Bye Blues" (Anne Wheeler), with Rebecca Jenkins, Luke Reilly, Robyn Stevan, Michael Ontkean, and Kate Reid.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Air America" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Mel Gibson and Robert Downey, Jr.
Theatre 2: "The Freshman" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Wild at Heart" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Two Jakes" (†).
Theatre 2: "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis, Scott Paulin, Ellen Greene, Mimi Kennedy, and Annie Ross.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Presumed Innocent" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Ghost" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through Aug. 30: "The Two Jakes" (†).
From Aug. 31: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Darkman" (Sam Raimi), with Liam Neeson, Frances McDormand, Colin Friels, and Larry Drake.
Theatre 2: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "My Blue Heaven" (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack.
Theatre 2: "Taking Care of Business" (Arthur Hiller), with James Belushi, Charles Grodin, Anne DeSalvo, and Mako.

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema 1 and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 30: "Ariel" (†). From Aug. 31: Theatre closed.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 30: "Fun Down There" (directed by Roger Stigliano), with Michael Waite. From Aug. 31: Theatre closed.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.
Theatre 2: "Darkman" (Sam Raimi), with Liam Neeson, Frances McDormand, Colin Friels, and Larry Drake.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"The Witches" (Nicolas Roeg), with Anjelica Huston.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 30: "Mo' Better Blues" (†). From Aug. 31: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.
Theatre 2: "Ghost" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Taking Care of Business" (Arthur Hiller), with James Belushi, Charles Grodin, Anne DeSalvo, and Mako.
Theatre 2: (Separate admissions) "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†); and "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).
Theatre 3: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 4: "Men at Work" (Emilio Estevez), with Charlie Sheen and Estevez.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "After Dark, My Sweet" (James Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern.
Theatre 2: "The Exorcist III" (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, and Scott Wilson.
Theatre 3: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).
Theatre 4: "Men at Work" (Emilio Estevez), with Charlie Sheen and Estevez.
Theatre 5: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.
Theatre 6: "Life Is Cheap . . . But Tiolet Paper Is Expensive" (Wayne Wang).
Theatre 7: Through Aug. 30: "My Blue Heaven" (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack. From Aug. 31: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.
Theatre 8: "Wild at Heart" (†).
Theatre 9: "Darkman" (Sam Raimi), with Liam Neeson, Frances McDormand, Colin Friels, and Larry Drake.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.
Theatre 2: "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis, Scott Paulin, Ellen Greene, Mimi Kennedy, and Annie Ross.
Theatre 3: "The Witches" (Nicolas Roeg).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Ducktales, The Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp" (Bob Hathcock), an animated film.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: A festival of films from Latin America. For information, call 598-7155.
Theatre 2: "The Exorcist III" (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, and Scott Wilson.
Theatre 3: A festival of films from Latin America. For information, call 598-7155.
Theatre 4: "Wild at Heart" (†).
Theatre 5: "Darkman" (Sam Raimi), with Liam Neeson, Frances McDormand, Colin Friels, and Larry Drake.
Theatre 6: "After Dark, My Sweet" (James

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When asked why it was difficult to create a musical comedy, the fabled score writer Frank Loesser quipped, “I don't know; maybe because people keep secrets from each other. Especially choreographers.” Hugh Lambert, the choreographer, and Bob Fosse, who did the “musical staging,” didn't keep anything from Loesser when they worked on “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying.” It tallied 1,417 performances on Broadway and won the 1961 Pulitzer Prize. But when adapter-director David Swift filmed it, in 1967, the show's deft movements got lost in translation. The problem may be that Swift attempts to re-create the stage experience too literally. You keep wondering why he doesn't go all the way and just have the actors sing and dance to the audience; as is, they often stare at some arbitrary mark offscreen.

Swift bathes the action in a de-luxe version of TV lighting: every set is lit up like an all-night drugstore. But partly because of its pristine look, along with its white-bread view of Manhattan and its multitude of secretary jokes, the movie (playing September 2 at Theatre 80 St. Marks) has turned into an entertaining period piece. This chronicle of a lovable climber, J. Pierpont Finch (Robert Morse), catalogues and pillories every flaw in corporate life—the nepotism, the buddy systems, the conformity, the promotion of style and image over thought and substance—while allowing you to root for “Pontie” as he turns them all to his advantage. It's the same juggling act done in “Working Girl,” “Opportunity Knocks,” and “The Secret of My Success,” but here it has more edge. And Morse is an irresistible clown. He turns his face and body into taffy and his eyes into twirling saucers; he's got just the right joyful malleability to put over the triumph of an opportunist.

Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
“Flatliners” (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
“The Witches” (Nicolas Roeg), with Anjelica Huston.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
“Akira Kurosawa's Dreams” (Kurosawa; in Japanese).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
“Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down” (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
Through Aug. 30: “Daddy Is Dyin' . . . Who Got the Will?” (Jack Fisk), with Beau Bridges, Keith Carradine, Beverly d'Angelo, Tess Harper, and Judge Reinhold.
From Aug. 31: Theatre closed.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
“Metropolitan” (Whit Stillman), with Edward Clements, Carolyn Farina, Christopher Eigeman, Taylor Nichols, and Allison Rutledge-Parisi.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
“Arachnophobia” (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
“Ghost” (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
“Wild at Heart” (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: “The Icicle Thief” (Maurizio Nichetti; in Italian), with Nichetti.
Theatre 2: “Cinema Paradiso” (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 3: “May Fools” (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
“Darkman” (Sam Raimi), with Liam Neeson, Frances McDormand, Colin Friels, and Larry Drake.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 30: “Taking Care of Business” (Arthur Hiller), with James Belushi, Charles Grodin, Anne DeSalvo, and Mako. From Aug. 31: “The Lemon Sisters” (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.
Theatre 2: “My Blue Heaven” (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack.
Theatre 3: “The Two Jakes” (†).
Theatre 4: “The Freshman” (†).
Theatre 5: “Presumed Innocent” (†).
Theatre 6: “Pump Up the Volume” (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis, Scott Paulin, Ellen Greene, Mimi Kennedy, and Annie Ross.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: “Mo' Better Blues” (†).
Theatre 2: “The Witches” (Nicholas Roeg), with Anjelica Huston.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: “The Exorcist III” (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, and Scott Wilson.
Theatre 2: “Flatliners” (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: “Air America” (directed by Roger Spottiswoode), with Mel Gibson and Robert Downey, Jr.
Theatre 2: “Mo' Better Blues” (†).
Theatre 3: “Total Recall” (†).
Theatre 4: “Die Hard 2” (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.
Theatre 5: “Presumed Innocent” (†).
Theatre 6: “Men at Work” (Emilio Estevez), with Charlie Sheen and Estevez.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
“Taking Care of Business” (Arthur Hiller), with James Belushi, Charles Grodin, Anne DeSalvo, and Mako.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: “Arachnophobia” (†).
Theatre 2: “Delta Force 2” (Aaron Norris), with Chuck Norris.
Theatre 3: “Delta Force 2.”

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Through Aug. 30: “The Two Jakes” (†).
From Aug. 31: “The Lemon Sisters” (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: “The Exorcist III” (William Peter Blatty), with George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, and Scott Wilson.
Theatre 2: “Darkman” (Sam Raimi), with Liam Neeson, Frances McDormand, Colin Friels, and Larry Drake.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: “My Blue Heaven” (Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin, Rick Moranis, and Joan Cusack.
Theatre 2: “The Witches” (Nicolas Roeg), with Anjelica Huston.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Aug. 27: “The Firefly” (1937, directed by Robert Z. Leonard), with Jeanette MacDonald and Allan Jones; and “One Night of Love” (1934, Victor Schertzinger), with Grace Moore.
Aug. 28-29: “Star!” (1968, Robert Wise), with Julie Andrews.
Aug. 30-Sept. 1: “Yankee Doodle Dandy” (†); and “Tin Pan Alley” (1940; Walter Lang), with Alice Faye, Jack Oakie, and Betty Grable.
Sept. 2-3: “The Wizard of Oz” (1939, Victor Fleming), with Judy Garland, Bert Lahr, Frank Morgan, Ray Bolger, and Jack Haley; and “Girl Crazy” (†).
Sept. 4-5: “Rosalie” (†); and “Dixiana” (1930, Luther Reed), with Bebe Daniels, Everett Marshall, Bert Wheeler, and Robert Woolsey.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Aug. 27: “La Grande Illusion” (1937, Jean Renoir; in French), with Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay, and Marcel Dalio; and “La Bête Humaine” (1938, Renoir; in French), with Gabin and Julien Carette.
Aug. 28: “Victim” (1961, Basil Dearden), with Dirk Bogarde, Sylvia Syms, and Dennis Price; and “Peeping Tom” (1960, Michael Powell), with Karl Boehm and Moira Shearer.
Aug. 29: “Scarlet Street” (1946, Fritz Lang), with Joan Bennett, Edward G. Robinson, and Dan Duryea; and “Man Hunt” (1941, Lang), with Bennett, Walter Pidgeon, George Sanders, and John Carradine.
Aug. 30: “Veronica Voss” (1982, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German), with Rosel Zech; and “Lili Marleen” (1981, Fassbinder; in German), with Hanna Schygulla and Giancarlo Giannini.
Aug. 31-Sept. 1: “The Maltese Falcon” (†) and “Casablanca” (†).
Sept. 2: “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying” (see blurb at left) and “The Producers” (†).
Sept. 3: “Juliet of the Spirits” (1965, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Giulietta Masina; and “Il Bidone” (1955, Fellini; in Italian), with Broderick Crawford, Masina, Richard Basehart, and Franco Fabrizi.
Sept. 4: “Portrait of Jennie” (1949, William Dieterle), with Jennifer Jones and Joseph Cotten; and “Duel in the Sun” (†).
Sept. 5: “I Could Go On Singing” (1963, Ronald Neame), with Judy Garland, Dirk Bogarde, and Jack Klugman; and “The Star” (†).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Aug. 27 at noon: “Bigger Than Life” (1956, directed by Nicholas Ray), with James Mason, Barbara Rush, and Walter Matthau. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 3: “The Three Faces of Eve” (1957, Nunnally Johnson), with Joanne Woodward, Lee J. Cobb, and David Wayne. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 6: “The Fly” (1958, Kurt Neumann), with Vincent Price, Herbert Marshall, and Al (later David) Hedison. . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at noon: “The Long, Hot Summer” (1958, Martin Ritt), with Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Orson Welles, and Lee Remick. . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 3: “An Affair to Remember” (1957, Leo McCarey), with Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr. . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 6: “Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison” (1957, John Huston), with Deborah Kerr and Robert Mitchum. . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at noon: “Blue Denim” (1959, Philip Dunne), with Carol Lynley, Brandon deWilde, and Macdonald Carey. . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 3: “Compulsion” (1959, Richard Fleischer), with Orson Welles, Dean Stockwell, and Bradford Dillman. . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 6: “Peyton Place” (1957, Mark Robson), with Lana Turner, Hope Lange, and Lloyd Nolan. . . . ¶ Aug. 31 at noon: “Wild River” (1960, Elia Kazan), with Montgomery Clift, Lee Remick, and Jo Van Fleet. . . . ¶ Aug. 31 at 3: “Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison.” . . . ¶ Aug. 31 at 6: “The Three Faces of Eve.” . . . ¶ Sept. 1 at noon: “The Fly.” . . . ¶ Sept. 1 at 2:30: “Blue Denim.” . . . ¶ Sept. 1 at 5: “The Long, Hot Summer.” . . . ¶ Sept. 2 at noon: “Compulsion.” . . . ¶ Sept. 2 at 2:30: “An Affair to Remember.” . . . ¶ Sept. 2 at 5: “Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison.” . . . ¶ Sept. 3 at noon: “Wild in the Country” (1961, Philip Dunne), with Elvis Presley, Hope Lange, and Tuesday Weld. . . . ¶ Sept. 3 at 2:30: “The Hustler” (1961, Robert Rossen), with Paul Newman, Jackie Gleason, Piper Laurie, and George C. Scott. . . . ¶ Sept. 3 at 6: “Wild River.” . . . ¶ Sept. 4 at 3: “Zorba the Greek” (1964, Michael Cacoyannis), with Anthony Quinn, Alan Bates, and Irene Papas. . . . ¶ Sept. 4 at 6: “Wild in the Country.”

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Aug. 29 at 12:30 and 6: “An American in Paris” (1951, Vincente Minnelli), with Gene Kelly, Leslie Caron, Oscar Levant, and Nina Foch. . . . ¶ Aug. 29 at 3:15 and 8:45: “Gold

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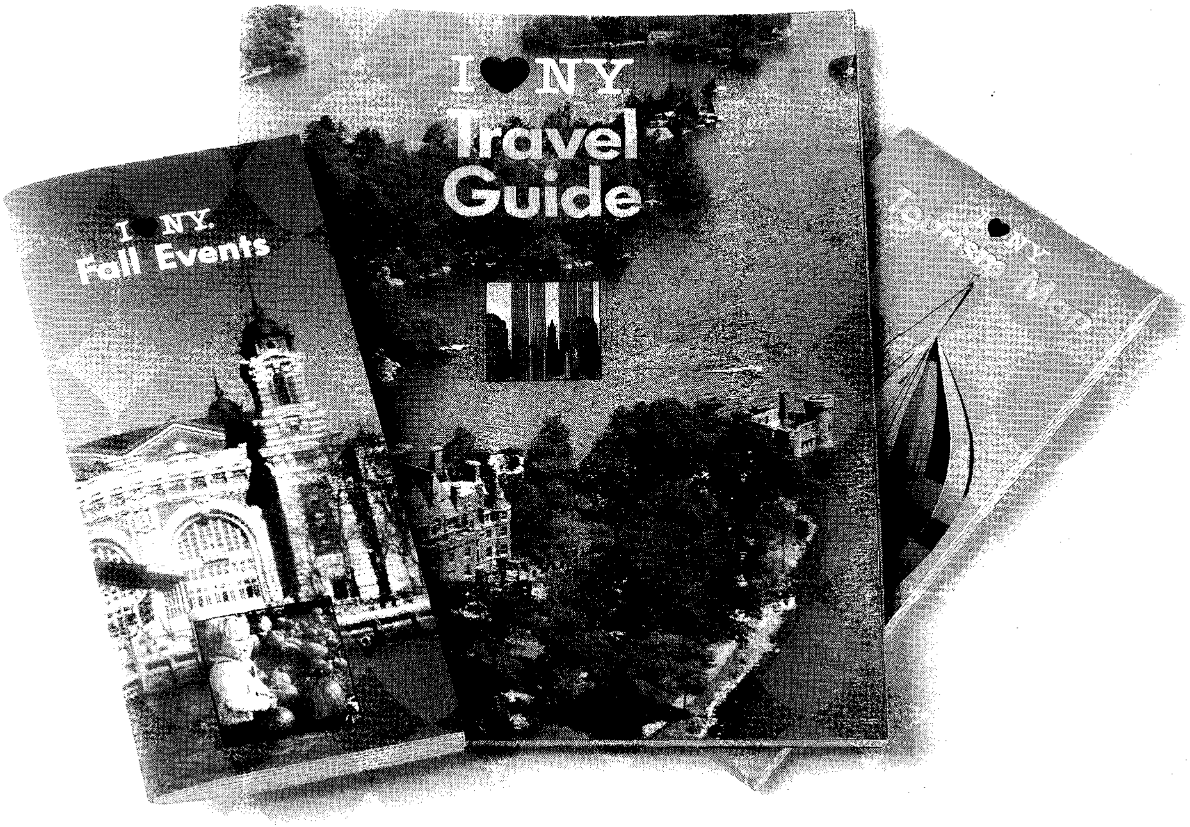

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Diggers of Paris" (1938, Ray Enright), with Rudy Vallée, Rosemary Lane, Hugh Herbert, and Gloria Dickson.

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," dramas shown on television over the past thirty years. Aug. 28-Sept. 1: Ken Russell and Sewell Stokes' "Isadora Duncan, the Biggest Dancer in the World" (1966, BBC), with Vivien Pickles. . . . From Sept. 4: Jeremy Sandford's "Cathy Come Home" (1966, Ken Loach), with Carol White. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6, Wednesdays through Fridays at 3, and Saturdays at 1. . . . ¶ "The Reiner Moritz Collection." Aug. 28-Sept. 1: "Monsieur René Magritte" (1986, Adrian Maben), a documentary. Showings Tuesday at 2 and 6:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2. . . . Aug. 28-Sept. 1: "Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice" (1989, Moritz). Showings Tuesday through Saturday at 3:15. . . . From Sept. 4: "The Story of Fashion: Remembrance of Things Past" (1987, Eila Hershon and Roberto Guerra), a survey of twentieth-century fashion. Showings Tuesday at 2 and 6:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2. . . . From Sept. 4: "Chanel, Chanel" (1986, Hershon and Guerra), a documentary. Showings Tuesday through Saturday at 3:15. . . . ¶ "Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends: A Tribute to Jay Ward." Showings Tuesdays at 3, 5, and 6:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3.

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the Courthouse Theatre or the Maya Deren Theatre. Aug. 30-Sept. 2 at 7: "The Territory" (1981, Raul Ruiz). . . . ¶ Four films by Aki Kaurismäki, in Finnish. Aug. 27-29 at 7 and Aug. 30-Sept. 2 at 8: "Shadows in Paradise" (1986). . . . Aug. 30-Sept. 2 at 8:50: "Crime and Punishment" (1983). . . . Aug. 30-Sept. 2 at 9:20 and Sept. 4-5 at 7: "Calamari Union" (1984). . . . Aug. 31-Sept. 2 at 5:30 and 10:30 and Sept. 3-5 at 5:30, 8:30, and 10:30: "Ariel" (†).

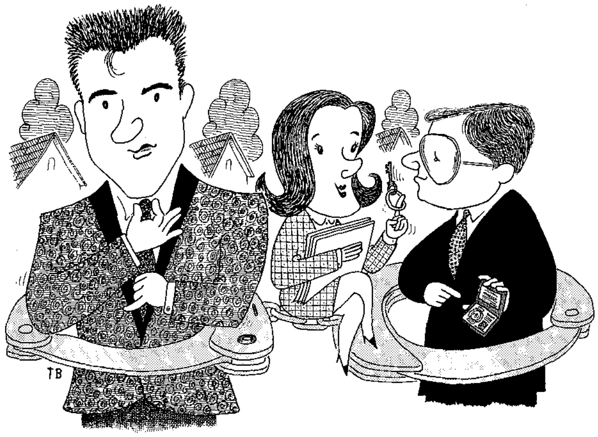
IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Arachnophobia—It's O.K. You don't feel suckered, though you don't feel elated, either. A deadly arachnid that is discovered in Venezuela kills a young photographer, crawls into his coffin, and travels from the Amazon to the fictional little town of Canaima, California. There, the hairy-legged intruder—a tarantula as big as a big guy's fist—breeds with a harmless domestic spider, and troops of poisonous bugs begin marching out of bathroom drains. But when it comes down to the basics of scare comedy the arachnids are short on personality, and so is the movie. The script, credited to Don Jakoby and Wesley Strick, has too many B-picture precursors, and the first-time director, Frank Marshall, is like a Boy Scout remaking "Jaws." The tricks and teases aren't hip enough to spook your imagination. Jeff Daniels is smooth as the doctor with the phobia, but his dread seems shallow. The doctor's wife (Harley Jane Kozak) is presented as the fearless, competent one; then she's dropped from view. John Goodman, in the role of the local exterminator, brings up the energy level. Also with Julian Sands as the uppity entomologist, Brian McNamara as his assistant, and Henry Jones and Mary Carver. The witless musical score, by Trevor Jones, is a flat-out insult.—P.K. (Cinema 3, and Embassy.)



Steve Martin, Joan Cusack, and Rick Moranis in "My Blue Heaven"

Ariel—This antic, briskly dreamlike road movie, by the young Finnish director Aki Kaurismäki, takes us along a route from Lapland to Helsinki, and the unfamiliarity of the sights is bracing. The eerily placid snow-covered landscape is beautifully photographed (by Timo Salminen). There's a haunted stillness to this terrain, a real chill—which, once the taciturn hero, Taisto (Turo Pajala), reaches Helsinki, turns into a more conventional hipster cool. Kaurismäki puts his resolutely inarticulate hero through all the usual deadpan routines in grungy settings: Taisto meets small-time crooks, has random and sometimes violent adventures, and, in general, bounces around like a pinball in that crazy machine called contemporary life. The movie isn't terribly original—essentially, it's an affectionate ripoff of early-sixties Godard—but it's good-humored and fairly unassuming. Kaurismäki has the sense not to fuss over his effects, so his postmodern vaudeville sketches go down easily, and the whole thing's over in seventy-four minutes. Also with Susanna Haavisto and Matti Pellonpää. In Finnish.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 8/27/90.) (Bleecker St. Cinema; through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ Anthology Film Archives; starting Aug. 31.)

Casablanca (1942)—Ingrid Bergman became a popular favorite when Humphrey Bogart, as Rick, the most famous saloonkeeper in screen history, treated her like a whore. Although their romance was certified by a collection of Academy Awards, they didn't press their luck and never appeared together again. In the role of the cynic redeemed by love, Bogart became the great adventurer-lover of the screen during the war years. In this film he established the figure of the rebellious hero—the lone wolf who hates and defies officialdom (and in the movies he fufilled a universal fantasy: he got away with it). Questioned about his purpose and motives, he informs the police: "I came to Casablanca for the waters." "Waters? What waters? We're in the desert." "I was misinformed." It's far from a great film, but it has a special appealingly schlocky romanticism, and you're never really pressed to take its melodramatic twists and turns seriously. The international cast includes Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, Claude Rains, Peter Lorre, Marcel Dalio, Helmut Dantine, S. Z. Sakall, Joy Page, Leonid Kinskey, Curt Bois, Dan Seymour, Ludwig Stossel, Ilka Gruning, Frank Puglia, Madeleine LeBeau, John Qualen, and, memorably, Dooley Wilson singing "As Time Goes By." Academy Awards: Best Picture; Director (Michael Curtiz); Screenplay (Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein and Howard Koch). And the Thalberg Memorial Award went to the producer, Hal B. Wallis. Based on the play "Everybody Comes to Rick's," by Murray Burnett and Joan Alison.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 31-Sept. 1.)

The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover—A movie about a crude British thug, Albert Spica (Michael Gambon), whose favorite method of terrorizing people is ramming things down their throats. Albert himself eats only haute cuisine; he and his wife (Helen Mirren) dine every night at a posh restaurant called Le Hollandais. This is an Art Movie, refined and terribly formal; the director, Peter Greenaway (who also wrote the script), places this barbarian smack in the middle of "painterly" compositions and encourages us to see him as a steaming hunk of offal desecrating the beauty of an artist's creation. He looks at Albert with the disdainful stare that the pukka sahib directs at a servant who has inconvenienced him. Greenaway, however, has a lot more in common with his loutish protagonist than he thinks. He obviously regards himself as an aesthetic virtuoso, but he's just a cultural omnivore. (He chews with his mouth open—we can identify almost every piece of art that has fed his imagination.) The only thing in this movie's tidy, hermetic universe that Greenaway is unable to control, or disguise with fancy brushwork, is his loathing of the body. The movie features several gross-out scenes, including a climactic act of cannibalism; the Motion Picture Association of America gave it an X rating. (The distributors released it unrated.) What's offensive about the picture, though, isn't its violence or its visceral shocks but the patrician arrogance, the smug aestheticism, the snobbishness that suffuse every frame. Greenaway is an intellectual bully: he pushes us to the ground and kicks art in our faces. Also with Alan Howard (the Lover) and Richard Bohringer (the Cook). Cinematography by Sacha Vierny.—T.R. (5/7/90) (Quad Cinema.)

Duel in the Sun (1946)—Hilariously florid—sometimes referred to as "Lust in the Dust." This Wagnerian Western features Gregory Peck and Jennifer Jones as lovers so passionate they kill each other. She's Pearl Chavez, a half-breed wench, and so, by Hollywood convention, uncontrollably sexy, and Peck actually manages to bestir himself enough to play a hunk of egotistic hot stuff—maybe the name Lewt McCanles got to him, or maybe the producer, David O. Selznick, used electric prods. Peck clangs his spurs and leers, while Jones tosses her hair and heaves her chest; when they kiss, lightning blazes. Set in Texas, it's a lavish, sensual spectacle, so heightened it becomes a cartoon of passion; the director, King Vidor, gives much of it a galloping bravura excitement, and the hokum is irresistibly entertaining. With Walter Huston having a roaring good time as a hellfire preacher, Butterfly McQueen going even further with the character she created in "Gone with the Wind," and Joseph Cotten, Charles Bickford, Lillian Gish, Herbert Marshall, Lionel Barrymore, Harry Carey, Sidney Blackmer, Joan Tetzel, Otto Kruger, Tilly Losch, and other well-known performers. The cinematographers include Lee Garmes and Hal Rosson; Dmitri Tiomkin perpetrated the score. The movie was "suggested" by the Niven Busch novel, and Selznick himself takes the screenplay credit. He also directed some scenes and Josef von Sternberg, William Dieterle, Otto Brower, B. Reeves Eason, and others had a hand in it.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 4.)

The Freshman—This comedy, written and directed by Andrew Bergman, wears its zaniness on its sleeve. The hero, Clark (Matthew Broderick), is a quiet young man from Vermont who has just entered the N.Y.U. film school. Within a few days of arriving in New York, he's making deliveries for an "importer" named Carmine Sabatini (Marlon Brando) and being treated like a member of Sabatini's family (or Family): Carmine's daughter (Penelope Ann Miller) has told her father that she wants to marry Clark, and the old man embraces him, with alarming enthusiasm, as "the son I never had." The movie is overinsistent and very erratic. When Bergman's jokes are good, they're sensational; when they're not so good, he repeats them again and again, as if they'd become funnier through familiarity. In this picture he has actors who play his sort of material to perfection. Miller and Bruno Kirby, as Carmine's fast-talking weaselly nephew, are hilariously unfazed by the family's criminal activities, and Broderick calibrates his reactions with remarkable comic dexterity. And Brando seems to be in a bizarre and wonderful world of his own. People in the movie keep staring at him and commenting on his resemblance to Don Corleone, and he plays along,

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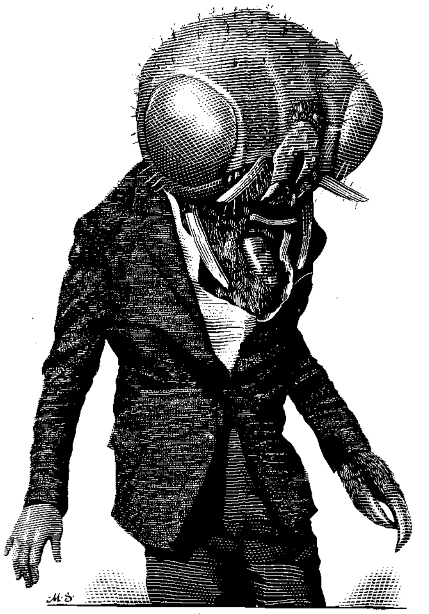

At MOMA, *Al (later David) Hedison in "The Fly"*

parodying himself marvellously. In his scenes the movie seems less frantic; its lunacy takes on an air of serenity—a deeper, more inexplicable, and much funnier weirdness. Also with Paul Benedict, Maximilian Schell, B. D. Wong, and Bert Parks (belting out "Tequila" and Dylan's sardonic "Maggie's Farm" at a formal dinner.)—T.R. (7/30/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Ghost—It sounds like a horror movie, but it's a romantic fairy tale. The scariest thing about it is its shamelessness. A young New York bank executive, Sam (Patrick Swayze), is killed, on the street, at a moment in his life when everything seems to be going his way. After his death, Sam sticks around, as a spirit (and Swayze stays onscreen, as a body). He attends his funeral; watches his beautiful girlfriend, Molly (Demi Moore), drift grief-stricken through the spectacular loft they had just moved into; and then devotes himself to protecting her from the people who killed him. Through a reluctant psychic (Whoopi Goldberg), he tries to communicate with Molly; later, an experienced ghost (Vincent Schiavelli) teaches him how to move objects and break stuff. In this movie, death is treated as if it were merely a form of disability, one of those handicaps we've seen people struggle bravely with in TV movies—something for the individual to triumph over, with will power, hard work, and love. This creamy-toned fantasy, directed by Jerry Zucker from a screenplay by Bruce Joel Rubin, certainly pushes the audience's emotional buttons. It's a twentysomething hybrid of "It's a Wonderful Life" and some of the gooier, more solemn episodes of "The Twilight Zone," and there's not a trace of wit or irony in it. Its images of death have a soothing banality, like a greeting-card message from the world beyond. Also with Tony Goldwyn and Rick Aviles.—T.R. (7/30/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, Art Greenwich Twin, and Loews Paramount.)

Girl Crazy (1943)—This popular, second movie version of the 1930 Broadway musical with the score by George and Ira Gershwin stars Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney; it's more freely adapted than the first, a 1932 R.K.O. film that starred Wheeler and Woolsey. This time the company is M-G-M, and the cast includes June Allyson and Nancy Walker, and Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra, who play nine Gershwin songs, including "Embraceable You" and the great, masochistic "But Not for Me." Norman Taurog directed; Busby Berkeley staged the song-and-dance sequences, including the killer finale, "I Got Rhythm," with Garland in white buckskins. (It had been Ethel Merman's big number in the original show.) With Guy Kibbee, Rags Ragland, Frances Rafferty, and Henry O'Neill. The script, by Fred Finklehoffe, based on the play by Guy Bolton and Jack McGowan, has to do with the girl-crazy Rooney being sent to a boys' college in Arizona; he saves the school by staging a musical rodeo. In its own terms, the movie—the eighth Garland and Rooney had made together—is just about irresistible.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 2-3.)

The Maltese Falcon (1941)—Humphrey Bogart's most exciting role was Sam Spade, that ambiguous mixture of avarice and honor, sexuality and fear, who gave new dimension to the detective genre. This film, the first directed by John Huston, is an almost perfect visual equivalent of the Dashiell Hammett thriller. Huston used Hammett's plot design and economic dialogue in a hard, precise directorial style that brings out the full viciousness of characters so ruthless and greedy that they become comic. The picture is so skillfully constructed that after many years and many viewings it has the same brittle explosiveness—and even some of the same surprise—that it had in its first run. Bogart is backed by an impeccably "right" cast: Mary Astor as Brigid O'Shaughnessy, Sydney Greenstreet as Casper Gutman, Peter Lorre as Joel Cairo, Gladys George as Iva, Elisha Cook, Jr., as Wilmer the gunsel, Jerome Cowan as Miles Archer, Lee Patrick as Effie, and Ward Bond and Barton MacLane as the cops.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 31-Sept. 1.)

May Fools—Louis Malle's new film takes place in May, 1968, when, for a few chaotic weeks, French society seemed on the verge of remaking itself: students were rioting, workers were striking, and the country came to a standstill. The characters in this picture are far removed from the stirring street theatre of May, '68, but they're affected by it nonetheless. The setting is a shabby estate presided over by Milou (Michel Piccoli), a genial man in his sixties who lives the life of a lazy country sensualist: he keeps bees, browns in the sun, and gropes the housekeeper. On the sunny day when the story begins, his mother dies, and he summons the rest of the family for the funeral and the reading of the will. There's a sense that things are about to change, both on the large scale of French society and on the infinitely smaller one of Milou's life. Malle and his co-writer, Jean-Claude Carrière, use the upheaval of May, '68, very deftly: it intrudes on their comedy like distant thunder on a sunny day, but the threatened downpour of Meaning never develops—we get a cooling shower of light ironies instead. Piccoli gives one of the best performances of his long career: he's vigorous and radiantly good-humored. Although its charm sometimes feels a bit too easy, the film is enjoyable throughout. It just bounces along to the rhythm of its remarkable score, composed and played by the eighty-two-year-old jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli; the movie, like the music, has a delicate swing to it. Also with Miou-Miou and Michel Duchaussoy. In French.—T.R. (7/16/90) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Mo' Better Blues—The hero of Spike Lee's film is a trumpet player named Bleek Gilliam (Denzel Washington), who is squarely in the tradition of obsessive, single-minded movie jazz musicians. Lee's script presents Bleek with a series of choices, about his love life, his artistic life, and the connections between them. The problem with the picture is that it doesn't frame the hero's choices so that we know what's at stake. And Lee doesn't seem to have thought through the role of the music. He has set the film in the present—in pointed contrast with other recent movies about jazz—but his attitude toward the music's relationship to contemporary culture is incoherent. The picture has a distracted, meandering quality. It leaves out all sorts of crucial information about the characters and then, after two long hours, ends with a slick, evasive montage sequence: eight minutes of images of domestic bliss, with John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme" on the soundtrack. Denzel Washington's magnetism and intelligence keep the movie watchable even during its most aimless stretches, but the script doesn't allow him to shape the performance. Lee's filmmaking here is all notions and no shape: hard, fierce blowing, rather than real music. Also with Wesley Snipes, Joie Lee, Cynda Williams, Giancarlo Esposito, Dick Anthony Williams, John and Nicholas Turturro, and the late Robin Harris. Lee himself plays a comic lovable-sidekick role. The score is by Bill Lee (the director's father), and the music of Bleek's quintet is played by the Branford Marsalis Quintet, with Terence Blanchard as the trumpet soloist.—T.R. (8/13/90) (Bijou Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Coronet, and Art Greenwich Twin; through Aug. 30.)

Presumed Innocent—A ponderous adaptation of Scott Turow's cunningly plotted mystery novel. The director, Alan J. Pakula, has shot and paced the movie as if it weren't a mystery but a serious character study, an art film. It's lit (by Gordon Willis) like "Cries and Whispers," only without the bright-red accents: the movie's palette seems to consist of brown and gray—earnest, business-suit colors. The lunacy of treating this story as a deep exploration of character is that the only thing we really want to know about the character in question—Rusty Sabich (Harrison Ford), a Midwestern prosecutor accused of murdering one of his colleagues (Greta Scacchi)—is: Did he do it or not? Ford, in what is probably an unplayable role, has to maintain a tense, repressed, impenetrable expression throughout. The supporting actors provide the picture with a bit of energy. Bonnie Bedelia, as Rusty's nervous, self-deprecating wife, gives lovely shadings to a tough part. As the judge presiding over Rusty's trial, Paul Winfield supplies some sorely needed comedy. And Raul Julia, as the hero's lawyer, is an elegant, commanding presence in the courtroom scenes. Also with Brian Dennehy. Screenplay by Pakula and Frank Pierson.—T.R. (8/13/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, 34th St. East, Cinema I, 68th St. Playhouse, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Producers (1968)—Zero Mostel as a producer who sells 25,000 per cent of a play, intending to produce a flop so that he won't have to pay the backers anything. Naturally, he produces a hit. Some of the material is funny in an original way, but Mel Brooks, who wrote and directed (both for the first time), doesn't get the timing right and good gags fall apart or become gross or just don't develop. The sequence consisting of tryouts for the role of Hitler in the play, which is called "Springtime for Hitler," is potentially so great that what he does with it lets you down. Still, terrible as this picture is, a lot of it is very enjoyable. For satire of the theatre as inspired as Brooks' gags at their best, it's not hard to put up with the ineptitude and the amateurish camera angles. It's even possible to put up with Zero Mostel in closeup. (He was not one to tone his effects down for the camera.) With Dick Shawn, Estelle Winwood, Renée Taylor, Kenneth Mars, and Gene Wilder, whose whining, strangled-voice bit is almost a shtick of genius.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 2.)

Rosalie (1938)—Eleanor Powell, in her big smiles and big puffed sleeves, and Ray Bolger dance together—sort of. She also has a sort of romance with Nelson Eddy, who looks even more uncomfortable about the whole thing than she does—and romance was never her forte. W. S. Van Dyke directed this berserk M-G-M extravaganza, which was vaguely derived from a 1928 Ziegfeld show, and produced and adapted to the screen by William Anthony McGuire, a former Ziegfeld aide, who swamped the cameras with a cast of over 2,000 people. Sometimes there are so many showgirls surrounding Powell that you have to strain to see her tapping away, like a wholesome automaton. Bolger redeems a few moments, and the Cole Porter songs (which replaced the original Romberg and Gershwin numbers) are a choice group, including "In the Still of the Night," "I Know It's Not Meant for Me," and "It's All Over But the Shouting"—which are, however, staged execrably. Porter is said to have hated the title song, which Louis B. Mayer loved; Mayer's ear matched his eye—the sets are to make a person of taste weep. The cast includes Frank Morgan (as a Ruritanian king), Ilona Massey (making her film début), and Edna May Oliver, Jerry Colonna, Janet Beecher, Virginia Grey, Reginald Owen, Billy Gilbert, and George Zucco. The choreography is by Albertina Rasch.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 4-5.)

The Sound of Music (1965)—Set in Austria in 1938, this is a tribute to freshness that is so mechanically engineered and so shrewdly calculated that the background music rises, the already soft focus blurs and melts, and, upon the instant, you can hear all those noses blowing in the theatre. Whom could this operetta offend? Only those of us who, despite the fact that we may respond, loathe being manipulated in this way and are aware of how cheap and ready-made are the responses we are made to feel. We may become even more aware of the way we have been turned into emotional and aesthetic imbeciles when we hear ourselves humming the sickly, goody-goody songs. The dauntless, scrubbed-faced heroine (Julie Andrews), in training to become a nun, is sent from the convent to serve as governess to the motherless Von Trapp children, and turns them into a happy little troupe of singers before marrying their father (Christopher Plummer). She says goodbye to the nuns and leaves them outside at the fence, as she enters the cathedral to be married. Squeezed again, and the moisture comes out of thousands—millions—of eyes and noses. Wasn't there perhaps one little Von Trapp who didn't want to sing his head off, or who screamed that he wouldn't act out little glockenspiel routines for Papa's party guests, or who got nervous and threw up if he had to get on a stage? The only thing the director, Robert Wise, couldn't smooth out was the sinister, archly decadent performance by Christopher Plummer—he of the thin, twisted smile; he seems to be in a different movie altogether. With Eleanor Parker, Richard Haydn, Peggy Wood, Anna Lee, Marni Nixon, and Charmian Carr, Heather Menzies, Nicholas Hammond, Duane Chase, Angela Cartwright, Debbie Turner, and Kym Karath. The music is by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II; the script by Ernest Lehman is based on the stage version by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse.—P.K. (Gotham Cinema.)

The Star (1953)—Very bad. Bette Davis as a star who once won an Academy Award but is now down on her luck; she lands in jail for drunken driving, and is saved by Sterling Hayden, a boat-builder who once acted with her. Others who wander about in this lachrymose, exploitative treatment of the lives of aging stars (it was originally written for Joan Crawford) are Natalie Wood, Minor Watson, Barbara Lawrence, and Warner Anderson. Directed—feebly—by Stuart Heisler. Davis throws her weight around but comes through in only a few scenes. Script by Katherine Albert and Dale Eunson.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 5.)

Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!—Pedro Almodóvar's new movie gets off to a fast start, like a windup toy, but it runs out of momentum early, and Almodóvar can't figure out how to start it up again. The story, about a released mental patient (Antonio Banderas) who follows a sexy actress (Victoria Abril) and then takes her prisoner, seems to tie the director's wild imagination down, and his efforts to keep his (and the audience's) blood circulating betray some desperation. Neither the kidnapper's romantic obsession nor his captive's eventual love for him is especially convincing. And we don't fully enjoy the perverse humor of the situation, either: we've seen the victim subdued by a hard slap, and that image is too strong to forget. The limpness of "Tie Me Up!" suggests that Almodóvar is either a confused director or a tired one—probably a bit of both. It's as if he had made the movie solely to satisfy the public's demand for a new Almodóvar film. Also with Francisco Rabal, Loles Leon, and Lola Cardona. Screenplay by Almodóvar. In Spanish.—T.R. (5/7/90) (Quad Cinema, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Total Recall—This fifty-million-dollar science-fiction thriller is full of relentless action and spectacular effects, and it's no fun at all. It's as heavy-spirited as its star, Arnold Schwarzenegger: imposing and implacable, like the killer robot Arnold played (or embodied) in "The Terminator." The script, by Ronald Shusett, Dan O'Bannon, and Gary Goldman, is based on a story by Philip K. Dick; the plot keeps twisting and turning, but we stop following it before the picture is half over. It's just a frame for meaty action sequences—a skeleton nestled deep inside ballooning muscles. The director, Paul Verhoeven ("RoboCop"), composes striking images, but they're oppressive and completely impersonal: every weird angle, every close-up of a face contorted with pain, every splash of bright-red blood is an effect borrowed from horror comics. The picture itself is a terminator: when it's over, you feel as if the life had been pounded out of you, and you never want to go to the movies again. Also with Sharon Stone, Ronny Cox, Rachel Ticotin, Mel Johnson, Jr., Michael Champion, and Ray Baker. Cinematography by Jost Vacano.—T.R. (6/18/90) (Criterion Center.)

The Two Jakes—Directed by and starring Jack Nicholson, this sequel to "Chinatown" (1974) begins absorbingly, with hard-edged dialogue and muffled echoes of the earlier film. Nicholson's Jake Gittes, the private detective specializing in divorce, takes on a client, Jake Berman (Harvey Keitel), a budding real-estate developer, and finds himself caught up in a murder case that somehow involves Katherine Mulwray, the daughter of Evelyn Mulwray, the Faye Dunaway character he loved in "Chinatown." But when we've got the setup clear in our heads and expect the movie to rouse itself, to develop a present tense and get going, it remains airless and murky. It proceeds phlegmatically, bringing in more and more characters and complications, and losing us. We don't get the film-noir thrill of mystery and resolution. By the time the plot comes together (more or less), we're benumbed. As the director, Nicholson doesn't give the characters any snap and he doesn't build the scenes; it's as if he were scratching his head each time the camera got turned on. As Gittes he wears a bitter half smile and gives a groggy performance. It's a spiritless movie, dark and mannered. There are good people in the cast—Meg Tilly, Madeleine Stowe, Rubén Blades, Frederic Forrest, Eli Wallach, David Keith, Joe Mantell, Richard Farnsworth—but they're emotionally distanced from us, and they don't seem to matter. The script (though not the narration) is mostly by Robert Towne; the cinematography is by Vilmos Zsigmond.—P.K. (Angelika Film Center, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews New York Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Loews 34th Street Showplace, U. A. East, and Loews Astor Plaza; through Aug. 30.)

Wild at Heart—Right from the start, just about everything is wrong with David Lynch's new movie, and the wrongness has an escalating, vertiginous quality. Every false move seems to lead to another, more disastrous than the one before. It's a buzzing, hyperkinetic picture, but its wildness is all on the surface: the images are elaborately conceived, arresting, and meaningless, like tattoos. The novel by Barry Gifford on which Lynch based his screenplay is a languorous, arty trifle about a pair of lovers named Sailor (Nicolas Cage) and Lula (Laura Dern), who drive from North Carolina to Texas and stop at ratty hotels and motels along the way; they're hard-lovin' losers who smoke a lot and don't get to the place they set out for (California). Their happiness is threatened by a variety of kinky villains, mostly of Lynch's invention: Gifford's poky Deep South odyssey is now an orgy of evil, full of graphic violence and grotesque craziness. The shocks don't have much resonance, though; the weirdness here is inexpressive and trivial, even silly. And the lurid villainy always seems diversionary, a baroque disguise for a bland, lifeless, and overfamiliar story. The movie is one startling lapse of taste after another; it's a sorry spectacle. Also with Diane Ladd, Willem Dafoe, Harry Dean Stanton, Isabella Rossellini, Grace Zabriskie, J. E. Freeman, W. Morgan Sheppard, Calvin Lockhart, David Patrick Kelly, and Crispin Glover.—T.R. (8/27/90) (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Yankee Doodle Dandy (1942)—The astonishingly versatile James Cagney as the prodigious actor-playwright-songwriter George M. Cohan, in a big, enjoyable musical biography, well directed by Michael Curtiz. Made during the Second World War, it's packed with jingoistic Americanism, but this ties in with Cohan's own attitudes and with the unself-conscious Irish-American sentimentality of his songs, and Cagney's stiff-backed hoofing is so spirited that the moldy plot turns hardly bother one. He gets to dance more in this movie than in any of his previous films, and though he was born in 1899 and is somewhat portly here, he is so cocky and sure a dancer that you feel yourself grinning with pleasure at his movements. It's quite possible that he has more electricity than Cohan himself had. (He took the Academy Award for Best Actor.) With Walter Huston, Joan Leslie, Rosemary de Camp, Frances Langford, Richard Whorf, George Tobias, Jeanne Cagney, Eddie Foy, Jr., Walter Catlett, Irene Manning, S. Z. Sakall, and George Barbier. The script is by Robert Buckner and Edmund Joseph; the cinematography is by James Wong Howe.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 30-Sept. 1.)

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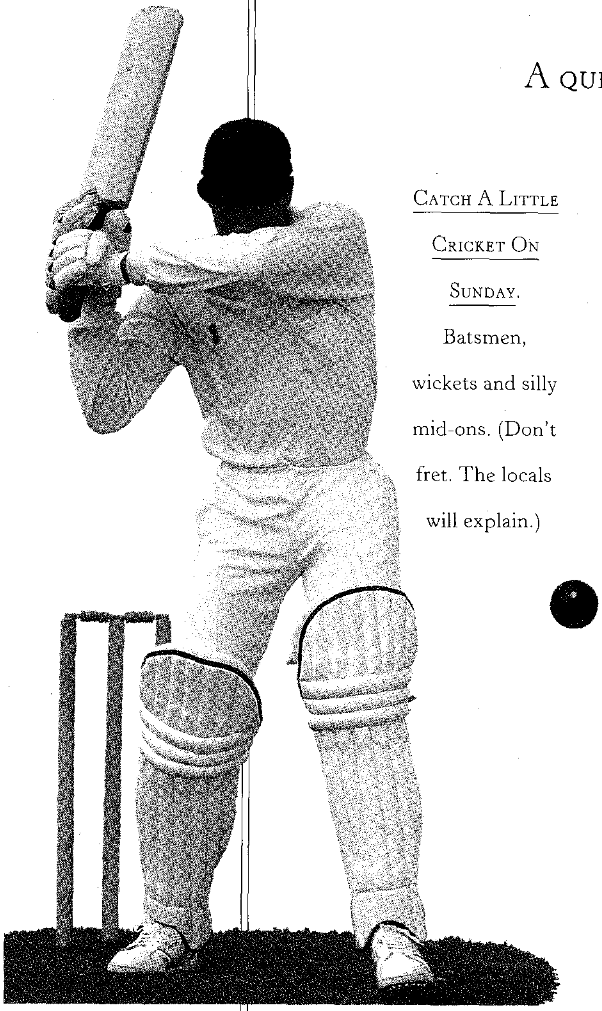

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

SEVENTY-SIX Augusts ago, an ill-fated chain of events led to the outbreak of the First World War—a war, historians later observed, that the major European powers did not really want, and could have avoided. Since none acted decisively to prevent it, however, it tumbled uncontrollably onto the world stage when the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, at Sarajevo, ignited a succession of threats and countermoves: they culminated in the frightful cataclysm that came to be called "the war to end all wars." Recent developments in the Middle East bear a disquieting resemblance to this history; once again, we are seeing how easy it is for events to acquire an unwanted momentum of their own. The escalation of belligerent rhetoric and muscle-flexing by both sides and the apparent unlikelihood of a negotiated solution to the dispute suggest that the gathering storm may burst, in awful destructiveness, any day now. Yet in following the news out of Washington one gets the feeling that many of our political and military leaders are far from displeased by this rush to war.

A useful thing about war is that it provides an excuse not to talk about certain things—since victory demands unity of purpose, divisive debate must cease—and in Washington, where avoiding unwelcome truths is second nature even in peacetime, this necessity has an irresistible appeal.

One of those unwelcome truths is the need to cut the budget—and, specifically, the military budget. As recently as two days before the Iraqi invasion, unnamed Pentagon officials were telling reporters that they expected military spending to be cut by approximately ten per cent (after inflation) over the next five years. General Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Dick Cheney, the Secretary of Defense, had presented President Bush with a scenario for eliminating five hundred thousand troops from the armed forces by the mid-nineteen-nineties. Now, in the light of the largest American military mobilization since the Vietnam War, such proposals are likely to be shelved. Saddam Hussein's aggression appears to have made the world safe for a continuation of stratospheric Pentagon budgets. A lobbying campaign on behalf of the B-2 bomber was victorious in the Senate after the Gulf crisis erupted, despite years of studies and tests showing that the plane's vaunted "stealth" capability is more fiction than fact. The rationale for roughly half the Pentagon's annual budget—deterring or fighting a ground war in Europe against the Soviet Red Army and its Warsaw Pact allies—had all but vanished by last fall, yet since then no elected official has spoken about reducing military spending by an amount anywhere near the hundred and fifty billion dollars that this changed circumstance implied. Instead, the debate, such as it has been, has consisted of the Democrats' proposing a twenty-five-per-cent cut over the next five years while the White House has insisted on a cut of no more than ten per cent. Such blinkered incrementalism in the face of a changed world order gives rise to a suspicion that Democrats and Republicans are not so much two different political parties as two wings of a single party.

Now the officially asserted necessity of insuring American access to Middle Eastern oil fields has presented the Pentagon with a new *raison d'être* at a time when the old one had disintegrated and efforts to replace it with something more au courant, such as a war on drugs, had stalled. Newspaper reports cite Administration estimates that American forces will remain in the Middle East for at least "a few years," which is to say, indefinitely. The expense of maintaining the projected force of a hundred thousand ground troops will be enormous, of course. As one Pentagon official told CBS News recently, "if you're looking for the peace dividend, it just left for Saudi Arabia."

For months, bipartisan federal-budget negotiators looked busy and accomplished nothing as they wrangled over how to reduce this year's deficit by some fifty billion dollars. In July, Representative Richard Gephardt, a Democrat from Missouri, emerged from budget meetings three days in a row and told the assembled television cameras, "This is very difficult." The Gulf crisis cannot have made the task any easier. But the negotiators, in-

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WET PAINT

stead of redoubling their efforts, seem to have agreed that the crisis offers a plausible pretext for lowering their sights. Adducing the turbulence in the Middle East and the ominously softening American economy, they now talk of a more modest deficit-reduction target of thirty billion dollars, and no one who has watched the dance of the deficit in Washington over the past decade will be surprised if even that goal is soon quietly abandoned. In that event, social programs that have already been slashed to the marrow will, under the Gramm-Rudman law, have to suffer additional spending reductions estimated at fifty-three billion dollars.

War, or even the threat of war, provides political cover for such sleight of hand. But neither the Republicans nor the Democrats needed any camouflage to refrain from candor on the other chief budgetary issue, taxes. Indeed, taxes have been the great unmentionable of American politics. Strategists and media advisers have counselled candidates that advocating higher taxes is politically suicidal. This view is justified, but not for the reasons usually advanced. Working- and middle-class voters are not necessarily opposed to all forms of tax increases; they simply know from experience that in practice "higher taxes" has meant higher taxes on them and lower taxes on the well-to-do. Now that Kevin Phillips, a former top Republican Party strategist, has documented as much in a new book, "The Politics of Rich and Poor," it is finally possible to say in mixed political company that the supply-side tax cuts of the Reagan years were an outlandish windfall for corporations and the rich. Yet the debate on rolling back those reductions has been as narrow as that on cutting the military budget. President Reagan, with energetic support from congressional Democrats, reduced the marginal tax rate on the richest one per cent of Americans from seventy per cent to twenty-eight. Now President Bush wants to cut the capital-gains tax while maintaining current income-tax rates and welcoming higher cigarette, liquor, and other consumption taxes—a package that would further skew the tax burden in favor of the rich. Meanwhile, the party that is the titular representative of the common man is divided over whether to increase the top bracket's rate to the thirty-three per cent paid by middle-class citizens and by the merely affluent or—radical thought—to raise it to as high as thirty-five per cent.

Robert McIntyre, who is the director of Citizens for Tax Justice, a public-interest group in Washington, wrote some months ago in the *Times* that "tax cuts enacted since 1978 for the richest one per cent" have been "the root cause of the Federal deficit," depriving the Treasury of some hundred and sixty billion dollars of potential revenues every year. Data of this kind, especially considered in conjunction with the savings achievable as a result of the new peace in Europe, suggest that the budget is not a hopeless conundrum. The country has far broader choices in allocating its public resources than the current stalemate in Washington might lead one to believe: the deficit could be eliminated outright, or funds could be set aside for the savings-and-loan bailout and the nuclear-weapons-complex cleanup, or something could be done about the nearly one of every four children under the age of six in this nation who is poor. Which, if any, of these and other options deserve to be pursued is a matter for political debate. But now that a line has been drawn in the sand, such debate seems out of the question. The advice that Machiavelli gave his Prince well over four centuries ago apparently still holds: War against an external foe is a most excellent means of distracting the populace from grievances at home.

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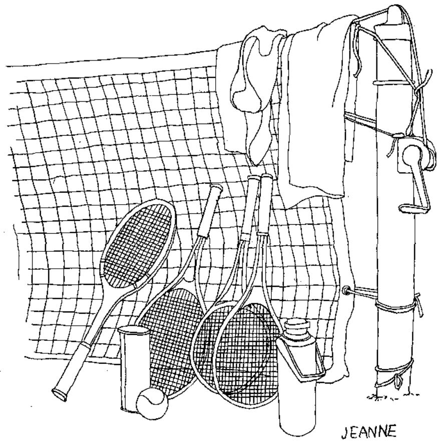
Plan B

OF the many New Yorkers who a couple of weeks ago were anticipating the arrival at Steinway Hall, on West Fifty-seventh Street, of the five-hundred-thousandth piano built by Steinway & Sons, four made a special point of being there to greet it. They were Gilbert Aime, the "traffic controller," or head piano mover, for Steinway & Sons, who was trying to devise a plan for getting the piano, packed in an especially elaborate case, off the truck and into the showroom; his two chief crewmen, Larry Vislan and Otis Brooks, who, although they hadn't yet had to pick up or move anything, had the exhausted look of football players at halftime; and a reporter, who was trying to write down exactly what the loading dock looked like, in case he forgot.



By one o'clock, the occasion had become a little anticlimactic. The piano had arrived once, earlier in the day, in a truck from Boston, where it had ended an inaugural world tour. But Gilbert had discovered that the truck was too narrow for the piano case to be rotated and opened. After pondering for a while, Gilbert sent the truck away and concentrated on what he might do next.

"Right now, two plans occur to me," Gilbert was saying, mostly to himself. "Plan A is this: We call that truck back from downtown. Then we back that truck onto another truck. Only this one is a— a trailer truck." He gave Larry and Otis a cheerful look, as if trying to make them visualize, along with him, the beautiful roominess of the second truck. "We take these two trucks and we place these two trucks back to back." Gilbert is from Haiti, and his accent made "back to back" sound like a cooling, romantic activity—like a dance. "So there they are, back to back," he went on, illustrating the position of the two trucks with his hands. "And then we ease that beautiful instrument from the first truck to the trailer truck, and we ease that instrument around"—his hands demonstrated the piano being eased around—"and then we just put it on a dolly and roll it out, on into the rotunda." ("The rotunda" is the Steinway name for the big, round showroom that fronts on Fifty-seventh.) Gilbert looked at his two chief aides, for encouragement. They gave him steady, affectionate, skeptical looks.

"Anyway, that's Plan A," Gilbert

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Dana Fradon

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said after a moment. "Plan B— Plan B is that we just slide it out on a trolley, on its side, in the case, and then right in here. It's— it's risky, Plan B. No question." He thought it over some more, and then said, "Plan B is a *risky* plan. But it might work." Larry and Otis looked as though they weren't a lot crazier about Plan B than they had been about Plan A.

"Gilbert," Larry said after a pause. "Did you tell this guy about the time we had to make that delivery to"—here he named a well-known musician—"and we had to bring along the D and the S?" For most of the past two hours, the three piano movers had been trying to keep the reporter amused by telling him good piano-moving stories. Most of the stories' punch lines, however, turned on Steinway piano jargon, and, in particular, on the code of initials that Steinway gives its pianos: a big grand piano is a B, an even bigger one is called a D ("For 'Da biggest,' " a Steinway man who looked in briefly that morning had joked with the reporter), a medium-sized piano is an M, and so on. The reporter had taken all this information down in his notebook. He had hoped his assignment would turn out to be one of those one, two, three jobs: the piano would arrive, he would play it, and he could go back to the office. It was a hot day.

Gilbert was coming to the punch line of the story. "So then Larry calls me and says, 'We can't fit that D in through the window, but we can give you two S's through the door.' "

There was a pause.

"Did you tell him about Horowitz's piano? How every year we would do a hoist job on Horowitz's piano? Until he died?" Otis asked.

"Yeah, I told him that," Gilbert said.

The three piano movers subsided into silence, trying to think of other colorful stories. The reporter reread the press release on the Five-Hundred-Thousandth Piano.

About half an hour passed. The Steinway man who had been around earlier came back and asked, "Any sign of ol' five-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh?"

Gilbert explained that the piano was on its way back uptown.

The Steinway man asked the reporter, "Is there any information I can give you? Any questions that just pop out?"

The reporter tried to think of something. He looked down at the press release in his hand. Finally, he said, "I read that piano No. 100,000 was made in 1903, and ended up in the Smithsonian, and then that No. 300,000 was manufactured in 1938, and given to the White House. So why did it take—what is it?—thirty-five years to make *those* two hundred thousand pianos, and then fifty years to make the *next* two hundred thousand?"

The Steinway man gave the reporter a hard, steady look. "Yeah," he said. "Look, you want some lunch or something? I mean, rather than just sit here and wait?" The reporter said that that sounded good, so the Steinway man took him around the corner to a little Italian place, where he ran through the whole business of the five-hundred-thousandth-piano once more: that this was only the third commemorative piano in Steinway's hundred-and-thirty-seven-year history, that the piano had been designed by Wendell Castle, "the premier American furniture designer," from "rare East Indian ebony" and "dyed Swiss pear," and that it had been "adorned" with the signatures of around eight hundred living Steinway artists—piano players who endorse Steinway pianos, even though none of them are given freebies on the instrument. The five-hundred-thousandth piano had been played at Carnegie Hall two years ago and had then been sent on a thrilling world tour, like a beauty-pageant winner, and was now back in New York, where it would remain on display at Steinway Hall indefinitely, and any New Yorker who wanted to could make a date to come and play it.

After coffee, the Steinway man said, "That question you asked? About the time it took to make the pianos. It was the war. We stopped production during the war. That's the answer." The reporter opened his notebook, turned to a clean page, wrote down "The War," and closed it again.

The two men went back around the corner to the loading dock. "It's on its way," Gilbert said, alight with hope. "They tell me it's between here and Thirty-fourth Street." The Steinway man went off again. Larry and Otis headed for Avery Fisher Hall to pick up a piano that Vladimir Feltsman had used the night before at Mostly Mozart. Gilbert and the reporter sat together in Gilbert's little office, off the loading dock, and Gilbert launched into yet more piano-moving stories. "Well, you've been asking yourself, Did it ever happen?" he began. "The answer: Yes, it *has* happened. Right *there*, where you are sitting. A piano fell on a man's foot." Gilbert fleshed out the story: the jangling chord made by the sudden crash, the edict for steel-capped shoes which was issued soon afterward. The reporter noted it all down. He decided to go for a walk, and come back in fifteen minutes and see if the piano had arrived. He walked up to the Park, sat down on a bench by the entrance, and shut his eyes. He fell asleep.

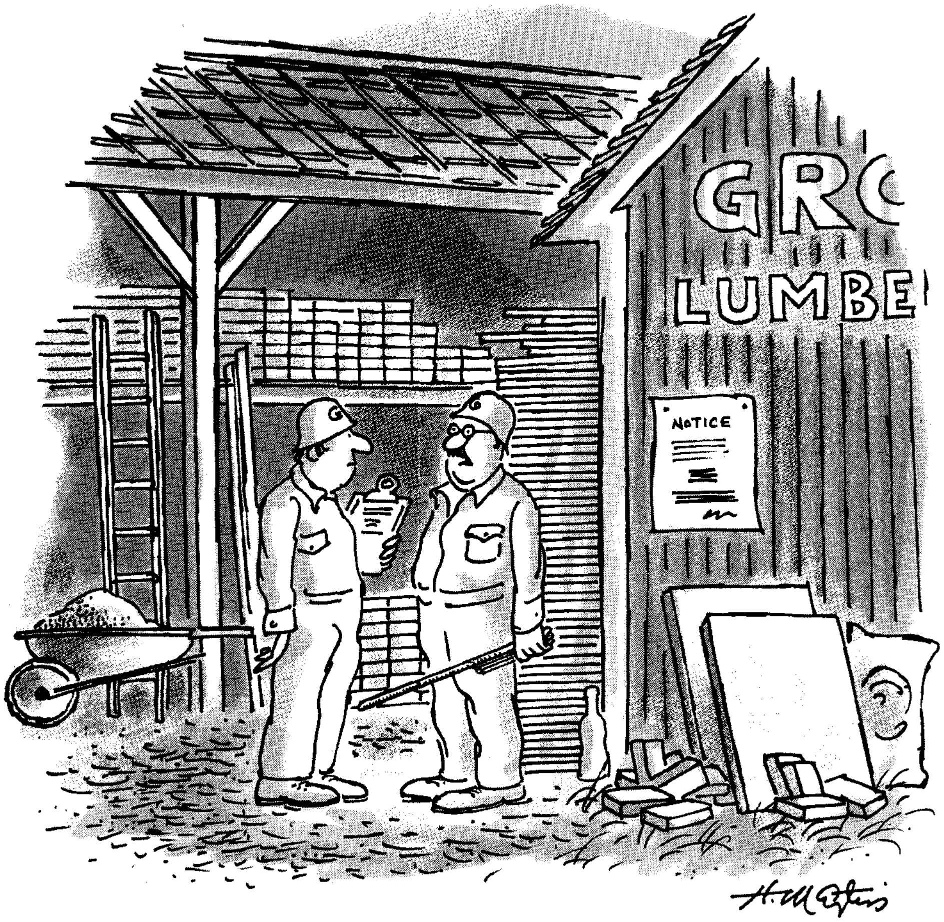
When he woke, an hour later, he glanced at his watch and ran back to the Steinway loading dock. Gilbert was there, looking for him. "It's already come!" he cried. "Where *were* you? Oh, it's already come, and it's so beautiful! It was Plan B. It worked perfectly. Slide it out and unpack it and set it up."

Larry said, "You have to see this—it's a masterpiece. The guy who made this—this guy was a *genius*." He took the reporter into a hallway near the loading dock and showed him an empty packing case stencilled, in italics, "No. 500,000." "Look at this thing," Larry said, opening the case and pushing the reporter inside. It was a remarkable box, full of hidden compartments and sliding doors and snug spaces, like some piece of magicians' equipment. "I mean, I've seen some travelling cases in my day—I've seen Horowitz's travelling case—but this thing . . . The guy who made this is a genius. It's a masterpiece. Look at how you can just fit the piano legs in here. I mean, we had that piano out of here and into the rotunda in no time. It's a masterpiece."

Inside the showroom, the Steinway man was sitting at the five-hundred-thousandth piano, playing scales. Covered with all those signatures, the five-hundred-thousandth piano brought to mind a high-school annual, or maybe a skiing-accident leg cast.

"Oh, there you are," the Steinway man said when he saw the reporter.

The reporter asked nervously whether he might play the five-hundred-thousandth piano. The Steinway man shrugged and stood up. The reporter sat down and started playing the theme from "The Sting": *duh-duh-duh*-da-*duh*-da-*duh*-da. It sounded loud. He groped with his left foot for the pedal that would quiet things down. Then he started playing the theme from "The Sting" again; it sounded even louder. So he played the opening chords from "The Way We Were." Those were all he knew. Once, for a few happy months toward the end of 1973, he had been in love with a girl whose family had a piano in the living room.

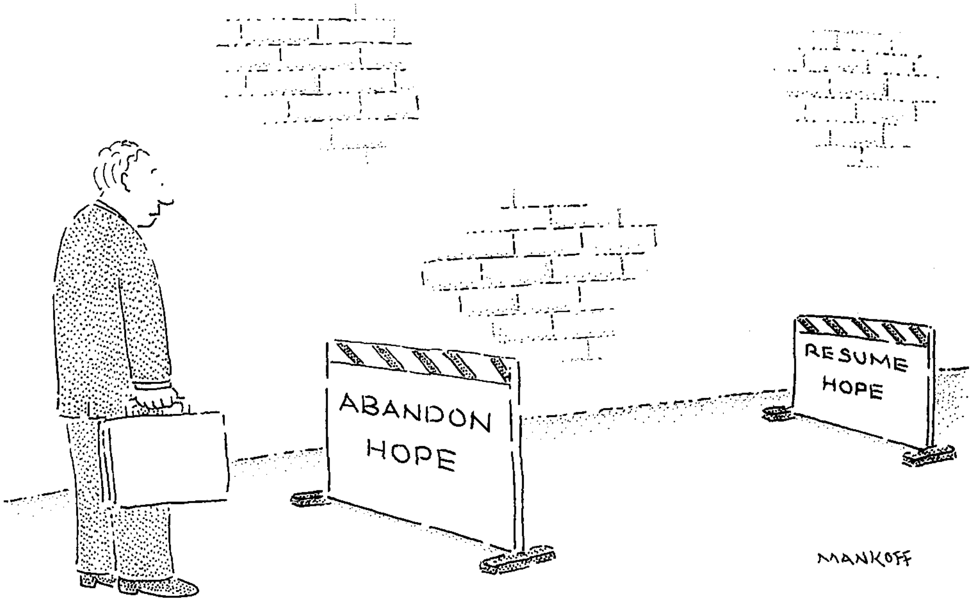


"Well, Al, the sixties was peace. The seventies was sex. The eighties was money. Maybe the nineties will be lumber."

Looking

AS the restoration of Grand Army Plaza was being completed, in June, the *Times* recalled the story of Cornelius Vanderbilt's moving his bedroom rather than look through its windows at the hindquarters of the goddess Pomona, whose statue graces the Plaza's south end. The story prompted us to turn the question around and wonder what statues look at.

Samuel Rea, a former president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, stands, holding a bronze hat and coat and a sheaf of bronze papers, between the main doors of 2 Penn Plaza, behind and above the Seventh Avenue entrance to Penn Station. He once occupied a niche in the old McKim, Mead & White Penn Station, but now he looks at a concession stand that displays impulse buys for commuters: popcorn, foil balloons, Dick Tracy dolls. Al Smith, standing among the Alfred E. Smith Houses, on the Lower East Side, looks down a double line of peeling sycamore trees at a row of stores across Catherine Street. The ethnic mixture of the neighborhood has changed since he grew up there—many of the shop signs are in Chinese, and discarded containers of duck sauce lie among the fallen sycamore leaves—but one feels he would not object at all to the company he keeps. Peter Stuyvesant, on the other hand, who harassed Quakers when he was the governor of New Netherland, and who now looks across the park named for him in the direction of the Friends Meeting House, on Rutherford Place, would probably object vigorously. Or so his sour expression suggests.



Washington Irving, whose bust stands in front of Washington Irving High School, looks over the shoulders of people using the corner phone booth. Franz Sigel, a German-American Civil War hero, sits in uniform on horseback on Riverside Drive at 106th Street, looking at a sign for the M5 bus. In Hanover Square, Abraham De Peyster, a seventeenth-century mayor, looks not at the pigeons about to alight on his wig or search for crumbs under his chair but at a brick building whose only noteworthy feature is a neon shoe in a ground-floor window advertising "REPAIR WHILE-U-WAIT."

Some statues look at nothing. Asia sits in front of the old Custom House, at Bowling Green, in what appears to be a religious trance. The Great God Pan, between Low Library and Lewisohn Hall on the Columbia campus, looks entranced, too, though his meditations are probably of a different character. But many statues, urban landscaping being what it is, look at other statues. Fitz-Greene Halleck, the American poet whom Ezra Pound thought comparable to Byron, sits in a chair on the Mall in Central Park, facing west. He looks at Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott, one on a stump, the other on a rock, facing each other. Beyond Burns and Scott is a rather standoffish Christopher Columbus, looking skyward, while behind Burns' back an Indian hunter and his dog slink toward the Sheep Meadow. The whole group has the air of a party after the guests have been introduced but before anyone has broken the ice.

El Cid, riding victorious in front of the Hispanic Society, on Audubon Terrace, shares with four warriors, numerous animals, Don Quixote, and the last Moorish king of Granada what must be the bleakest view confronting any of our public statues, for the courtyard in which they are set is as bare as a bowling alley and as silent as a graveyard. Outside the Audubon Terrace gates, upper Broadway, with its grocery stores, drugstores, and shops offering *chocolate caliente*, bustles with life. Inside, El Cid might as well be in a museum storeroom.

The most depressing view, however, surely belongs to Juan Pablo Duarte, the founder of the Dominican Republic: he stands in a triangular park at Sixth Avenue and Canal Street, and thus looks perpetually at the backed-up trucks waiting to go through the Holland Tunnel. Duarte, who holds a cane, has an off-balance stance, as if he might at any moment clump off to find a better spot. One that he probably wouldn't seek to appropriate is that of Samuel S. Cox, a nineteenth-century congressman who tried to raise the salaries of postmen, since Cox has been rewarded for his efforts with a corner of Tompkins Square Park, from which he looks at King Tut's Wah Wah Hut.

Wladyslaw Jagiello, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, looks at what may be the most soothing scene. On Saturday afternoons, there is folk dancing in front of his horse in Central Park, but when we inspected his view on a weekday we found him looking at a woman musing beside Belvedere Lake, a kid dragging a net along the edge, a man sketching, a fashion model and her entourage doing a shoot, and a little white heron. That is one kind of urban idyll. Father Francis P. Duffy, chaplain of the Fighting Irish, has the best view of another; he stands just in front of the TKTS booth in Times Square. The afternoon we paid our visit to him, he was looking at tourists reading, eating, drinking, or just staring as they stood in line for tickets; parked sightseeing buses; pushcarts; a salesman of *Street News;* a huge yellow crane; a row of blue police sawhorses; half a dozen movie marquees; twice as many giant signs; and an endless rush of cars. He also looked at the back of George M. Cohan.

HEDGES

I

"THAT you Daddy Doctor? Din-dins ready."

"Hallo Mummy Doctor! Just coming. Must wash puddies first. Coming in a minute. Mm! Smells good, your din-dins. Grub, grub, wonderful grub."

The Doctors are proud of their downstairs cloakroom opening off the hall just inside the front door. Daddy Doctor whistles when he comes out, a sort of proud little tune.

The Doctors explain that they met over a crucible. Their surname being Wellington, they explain, too, that they are happy that they have "a pair of Wellingtons"—twins. Mummy Doctor says that she always believed she could not live without a bicycle and a pair of wellingtons.

The Doctors ride their bicycles to the university every day when the weather is fine. When it's wet they catch a tram. They seem pleased to tell me things.

Mummy Doctor says she always thought wellingtons were called gum boots.

"It depends," Daddy Doctor says, "on where you went to school."

"Yes of course," Mummy Doctor agrees.

The little girls drink their milk, their solemn eyes regarding us over the rims of their Beatrix Potter mugs.

"Daddy Doctor? More puddy?"

"Daddy Doctor has had more than enough puddy. What about Mummy Doctor? Mummy Doctor have more puddy?"

"Well perhaps one teensy spoonful."

The Mummy Doctor one offers to share with me the last of the apple charlotte she has made. "Dried apple rings, Vera," she explains. It is my first meal with the Doctors. I shake my head.

"No, thank you. I really cannot eat any more."

The Mummy one drips cod-liver oil on the living-room carpet, and whenever she cuts bread for toast, she makes crumbs in the knife-and-fork drawer.

I don't know where anything goes in the kitchen, and I pick up a plate and put it down in another place. I feel big in my woollen smock, the only thing I can wear now. Under the smock my skirt gapes, expanded on an elastic with a safety pin. My socks are darned solid.

I have been here for two meals now. I have helped with the washing up and fastened the little girls' shoes, little button shoes to wear in the house only.

The Mummy one explains that her sister will be coming to stay for her long-weekend break soon. She explains, too, when we are upstairs, that the Daddy one likes to be called upstairs at bathing time.

"Daddy Doctor! Bath time!"

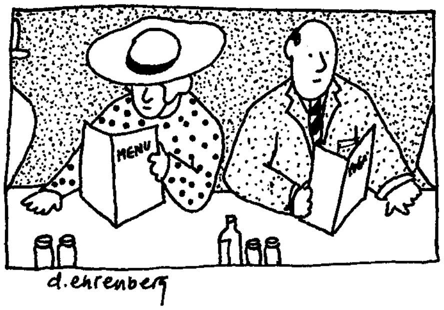
"Coming Angie. Coming Barbie. A and B. Angle, Bangle, I'm coming up to the bath! Roar!"

Daddy Doctor comes up the small staircase two steps at a time. He is laughing; he smiles at me as I try, in the small space in the bathroom, to not be in the way.

They are doing their utmost to make me feel welcome in their house.

They call each other Daddy Doctor and Mummy Doctor, and the little girls are Angela and Barbara. Angie and Barbie. A and B. Sometimes Angle and Bangle. They are four years old. The two doctors are very kind to me, and they trust me with their pretty little girls who like to change their frocks and have their smooth hair brushed several times a day. They are well behaved.

The trouble is, the only trouble is that I am lonely. I feel alone all the time, even when I'm busy, like now, out shopping with Mummy Doctor and the twin pushchair, which has a big waterproof shopping bag fastened to it. I can't explain to myself what it is like to be on the edge of someone else's shopping. I am trying to be enthusiastic and pleased. Being on the edge of the shopping, walking by the pushchair on the grass-edged footpath, is the same thing really as living in their house, being on the edge of the family.



Two doctors in one house, the Ph.D. sort. Every morning they go off to the university to lecture and demonstrate: maths, equations, physics (hers); rocks, earth, boulders, and minerals (his). Sometimes, like today, Mummy Doctor takes an afternoon off to teach me the shopping. And another afternoon she came home early and we all went to my doctor's office and sat together in the waiting room. The little girls whispered to each other, their blond heads shining in the rather dark room. When I came out from my antenatal appointment the doctor came out of his surgery with me and chucked them both under their dimpled little chins. He is their uncle.

As I walk with Mummy Doctor to the shops I stare at the beaten earth of the footpath and I stare at the garden gates, looking closely into the hedges as we pass. I'm not looking for birds' nests, I'm looking into the dark evergreen foliage and at the dusty thin branches and twigs and at the glossy thick leaves and the prickles of the holly. As we pass I say the names of the houses to myself: Chez Nous, St. Cloud, Prenton, Sans Souci, The Pines, Holly House, Barclay, and Newton, names chosen and painted on the gates or on little varnished boards screwed to the gates. Closely watching the hedges, I am closed in by them, and do not look too much at Mummy Doctor and her two little girls.

This war! It has really levelled people. Quite well-off women wear ugly head scarves and out-of-date clothes, especially here in the Midlands. Mummy Doctor wears an old bluish coat and a round hat over her hair, which is scraped into an unbecoming bun. I am wearing my school overcoat, which is keeping up with my mother's expectations of good quality and lasting for years. The little girls have velvet collars on theirs.

The gardens in Clifton Way will be pretty with crocuses and daffodils later on, Mummy Doctor tells me. I, meanwhile, am longing for my baby to come so that I can stop being a mother's help—for a while at least. It is much harder than I thought it would be. I can't think how I could ever have thought it would be a good way to live. Having to get away from the hospital and the other nurses somehow made me look, I see now, towards being somewhere else. I have a little room at the top of the stairs. The room is all right. There is a bed and a chair and a cupboard, and the window looks out over the gardens. I am in the house all day with the two little girls while Mummy Doctor and Daddy Doctor are away at their university.

We use my green ration book to go to the front of the queue, and I collect the extra oranges we can have, and the eggs. I carry the oranges in a string bag and try to be agreeable and pleasant, but we are now in the streets where I used to walk sometimes with Dr. Metcalf, quite near the hospital. I thought that taking work and living near familiar places, places where I had been with him, would make it easier, but it doesn't. I try to enjoy the sensation of the fresh cold air on my face but feel I want to cry. All I can think about is that Dr. Metcalf went away to the war when it was really over, and was reported dead after an accident.

We have come to the corner where I ran to Dr. Metcalf once, when he had his back to me and I surprised him. It was summer then. Being in this street where I once was able to see him and meet him is not what I thought it would be. I try to listen to Mummy Doctor and to pay attention to the chatter from the pushchair during the slow and incredibly boring progress of the shopping expedition. On one side is a coffee shop where Dr. Metcalf and I had some coffee once. It was a terrible coffee, he said then, but it made us laugh. Mummy Doctor does not even notice this shop. Why should she. She has made up her mind to ask the butcher for something extra. She asks me if I like corned beef, perhaps. I try to remember what corned beef is.

Mummy Doctor and Daddy Doctor argue, for fun only, about who shall have the last drop of coffee at breakfast. Every morning there are two hand-painted saucers on the table. One is for real butter, a small square of real butter, and one for margarine. Both Doctors are careful not to help themselves to the butter. Their knives avoid the butter saucer and, taking a tiny scrape of margarine, they spread it thinly on the crooked slices of toast. Both Doctors talk and crunch their toast shamelessly. I spread margarine thinly on my toast, too, and the butter saucer is returned, after the meal, to the slate shelf in the small pantry.

"Don't you love Amagansett and all the people in really nice sweaters?"

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At the hospital we had to queue once a week for our rations. We all carried little screw-top jars, one for butter, one for sugar, and one for jam, in a string bag. We never went anywhere without these string bags. Often we ate up a whole week's butter ration at one go and then ate the strong-smelling yellow margarine provided on the dining-room tables.

The untouched butter saucer makes the funny stories, the amusing anecdotes at mealtimes, simply stupid. During our meals, which are, as they say, *en famille* (but in this small house where else could I have meals?), they remind themselves of exotic foods they were accustomed to before the horrid war, before rationing. Daddy Doctor cuts his toast into little squares and moves little heaps about on his plate and remembers a particularly large and juicy steak that had two fried eggs and mushrooms on top of it.

I have been here for three days, and now while I am awake in the night it seems to me I have been here forever and simply have no chance of getting away. If my baby would come now I'd be able to leave at once to go away to the nursing home. My baby can't be born yet—it isn't time. This evening I burn the potatoes, and both the Doctors keep on saying how much they prefer to have bread in their gravy instead of potatoes. The meal is only potatoes and gravy in any case—now bread and gravy. I can see, too, all through the meal, that they are trying to think up amusing little anecdotes to tell in well-bred voices.

I am cold in this little room at night. It is worse in this place, worse than anything I have ever known. I can't help hearing the Doctors talking in low voices in bed, in their room. The Mummy one says the twins seem subdued, unnaturally subdued, she says. Are they sickening for something, she wonders. Perhaps, she argues, she should not have accepted the position in the department after all. Perhaps it was not the right thing to do. The Daddy one consoles her, saying that the children are fine, they are just a bit shy with a new person. I can hear him telling her to enjoy the university, and I can hear them turning over in bed towards each other.

THE little girls have piano lessons. A shabby old man comes to teach them. He has pencilled in on the spaces and lines: "F,A,C,E." "Face," he says. And, "Eat Good Bread Dear Father. E,G,B,D,F." He takes off his long black overcoat and his black hat when he comes, and I make cocoa for him. Mummy Doctor says I am to give him something to eat. She makes a sort of gingerbread using hardly any sugar and no butter and no real eggs. She says to give him some of that and to have some myself. I can smell the dried egg inside the ginger. I still can't eat dried egg. This is a part of being pregnant. Nurse Roberts, at the hospital, was the same. They said just looking at the packet made her throw up all over the place. They said Dr. Metcalf was the father of Nurse Roberts' baby, too. Roberts, they said, stayed too long at the hospital. She showed dreadfully. I mean everyone *knew*. At least I got away before I was really *showing*. At least, even if Trent and Ferguson and the others guessed, they didn't really *know*.

After I've made the old man's cocoa, I have some time to myself. I think I might write something, a letter to someone. I listen while the music master plays something himself for the little girls to dance to. He plays from Schubert—"Rosamunde." I can hear the little girls laughing and dancing, thump, thump, round and round in the small sitting room. Upstairs in my cold bedroom I sit with my pen and my writing pad, and suddenly there isn't anyone I can write to.

"Rosamunde": my mother, despising the people in the house next door when I was a child, said every night that the only music those next-door people could play was "Rosamunde," and only a part of the overture at that. She described it as an infectious music, a music for which people who know nothing about music could safely learn the piano arrangement and appear to be musical. "On cheap piano," she said, "and, worse, on Pianola!"

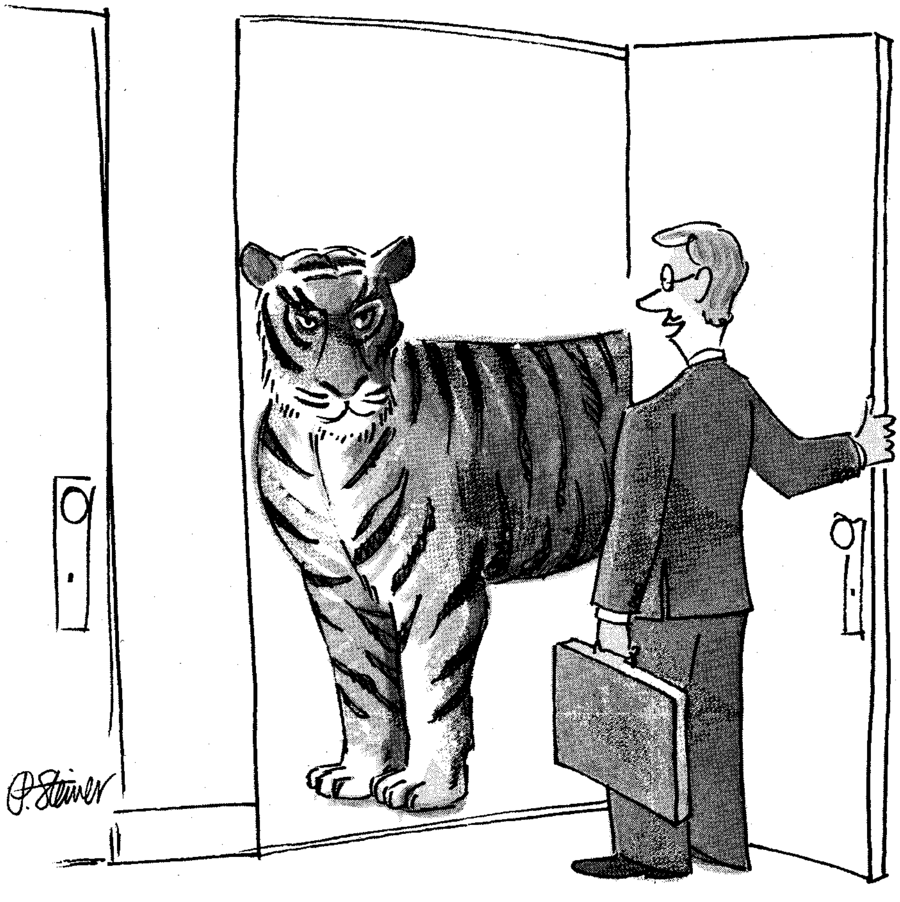
While I sit in this cold little bedroom remembering my mother I wish for her. The very stupidity of the wish is enough to make me start crying. I know that after a very short time in my mother's house I always want to leave, to go somewhere else. Now, of course, there is nowhere else to go to.

SUDDENLY it seems that I am bigger. I feel clumsy and slow when I move, but the little girls never run away when we go along the street for a walk. They walk with dainty little steps and hold my hands, one on either side, with their furry little gloves, which are attached to an elastic passing through their sleeves and under their coats. This, I can see, prevents the gloves from being dropped and lost. I shall do this for my baby when the time comes.

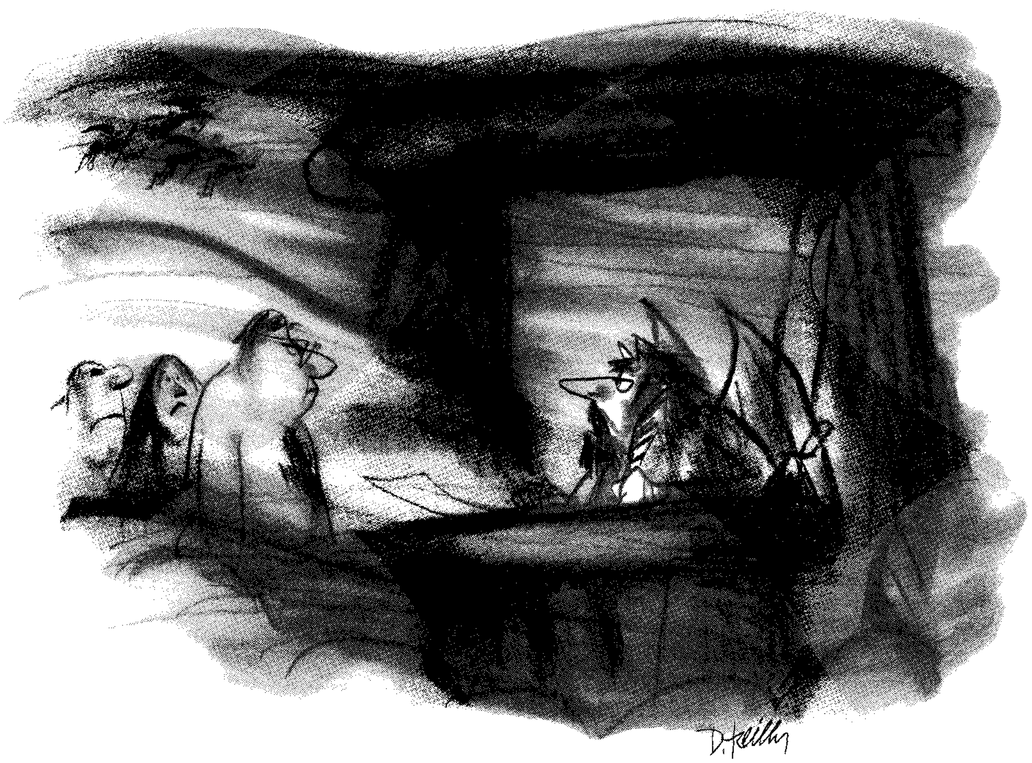
The hedges are all along this street and the next and the next. The leaves are dark green and glossy, sometimes shining wet and at other times marked with the dust. Looking closely at the hedges I can see places where the grass of a lawn shows or, beyond the lawn, the lighted windows of a front room or the stained glass of a front door. The hedges are old. They are the evergreens: the laurel, the privet, the rhododendron, and the holly.

TONIGHT at bath time Daddy Doctor comes upstairs, and they all laugh and splash together, and Mummy Doctor says they must not be too excited just before beddy-byes, and I am not at all sure what I should be doing, so I stand there trying to smile and to look like a part of the happiness. If my baby could be born tonight, I could go away now. I could tell the Doctors I am in labor and need a taxi, at once, to the nursing home. But I am not in labor. I wipe the floor and the next minute it is all wet again, which is quite good, really, because I can wipe it once more and look as if I am doing something.

I understand that I am living through each small event of the day to get to the end of each small event. For example, the bath time: I start off by looking forward to the end of it, to the



"Sorry. I was expecting the lady. I can see you're busy. I'll call sometime. We'll do lunch."



"Because it's a new category, they haven't settled the details of what to do with those who have sinned against the planet."

time when bath time is finished, bath cleaned, floor wiped, bath toys hung up to dry, and the little girls neatly in their beds, and then I have to realize that this end to which I looked forward is nothing. I came to nothing, nothing at all. And straight away I am looking towards the end of the next thing. Like this evening, when Daddy Doctor has to go back to his department for a meeting and Mummy Doctor says that as we're going to be on our own we'll be cozy and eat our supper on the floor by the fire.

I can't wait for the end of this supper. It is some scraps of boiled celery on toast. Mummy Doctor makes it. The celery is a bit burned and has a strong taste, but it is not exactly that. It is more Mummy Doctor talking of where we'll put my baby's cradle and how she will make some cot sheets and pillowcases out of some of my old hospital aprons, and though I long for the end of the evening, I can see, too, the prospect of my being here forever in the house after my baby is born. I know that this is the arrangement, but I have never considered it as I have to consider it now.

It is strange, too, to think that I actually looked forward to Daddy Doctor being out for the evening, when it is in fact easier to sit there while the two of them talk to each other. When I think about my life before Dr. Metcalf left for the war, I was always getting through time and things, working towards the hours when I could be with him. This habit, kept up now when he is not here to be with, is of course a way of living which does not offer me anything except an unbearable emptiness.

"ARE you—at least were you—a gymnast?" The doctor, Daddy Doctor's brother, asks me on my next antenatal visit. "Your muscles . . ."

"No," I tell him, "a nurse. I trained as a nurse." This time I have come alone to my appointment.

"Aha! All that walking, fast walking, back and forth." He gives a little laugh. "Walking, not running. Nurses can only run for a fire, a hemorrhage, or a vomit bowl. Correct?"

I give a small smile and a nod. He says, when he has finished the examination, that everything's fine. He says he's booked a bed for me at a nursing home in Hilda Street, run by a Sister Peters. My mother will pay for it. He suggests that I go, one afternoon, to see Sister Peters.

"Gladys will take you;" he says. "She and Sister Peters were at school together."

"Gladys?"

"Yes. Gladys, my sister-in-law. Three Wellingtons," he laughs, "and one little pair." He says the joke's wearing thin. It's clear that he loves his little nieces. "The little pair of Wellingtons," he says. I want to linger in his friendliness. I wish that he could remember me not from my previous visit but from when I was working at the hospital.

I almost tell him that I remember him. That in an exam once, a practical exam, I pushed the monaural stethoscope towards him. He was supposed to diagnose a patient from her own description of symptoms and his own observations. The patient was simply pregnant. It was a trick question. A normal condition presenting symptoms. My pushing the monaural stethoscope towards him was the smallest movement, the slightest hint.

I almost ask him, while he writes up my card, if he remembers Dr. Metcalf. If, by any chance, he knew Dr. Metcalf. Dr. Metcalf would have been older, but they might have, at some stage, consulted or worked together.

I am dressed and ready to leave. Of course I can't speak to him about Dr. Metcalf. And of course I don't really remember him from a doctors' practical exam. It is just that I wish so much to remember him, to be able to talk to him.

"A shared practice," he is saying. "Next time you will see my colleague Dr. McCabe. She is very nice and will look after you well."

I remember McCabe. Some of the nurses called her a cold fish. They did the suprapubic catheters themselves, during the night, rather than call her from the Residents' Corridor. Dr. Heartless, Trent said once, and we all agreed.

I walk back to Clifton Way instead of taking the bus, even though I know it says in my "General Textbook of Nursing" (seventh edition; 1942) that a pregnant woman who does housework and shopping does not need to take a walk every afternoon. I consider the hedges as I walk, the varying states of the bushes, some well cared for and others neglected. Since I am alone I do not need to study the hedges as carefully as I do as a rule. I notice the places where railings, sacrificed for the war, have been removed, and I look into the laurel and the privet, the rhododendrons and the holly—evergreens in a series of repetitive quartets. There is one garden scattered with toys, a doll's pram on its side and three tricycles crashed together on the path. I like this garden and wish that it were my place, with the children's toys all over it, and a husband coming home in the evening.

When it is time to register my baby, though she will have to have my surname, I shall have her father's name, Dr. Jonathon Metcalf, in the place for father's name on the birth certificate. Who will see this certificate? I mean, my mother will not see it, neither will Trent or Ferguson. The garden with the wild toys and this thought about the certificate make me reasonably pleased. I walk out to the far end of Clifton Way to the little park where there is a small lake. I sit on the bench nearest the water and watch the small choppy waves as they hurry, in the wind, towards the shore. It is not at all sheltered here and the wind is cold.

SHE WAS WAITING TO BE TOLD

For you she learned to wear a short black slip
and red lipstick,
how to order a glass of red wine
and finish it. She learned to reach out
as if to touch your arm and then not
touch it, changing the subject.
Didn't you think, she'd begin, or
Weren't you sorry. . . .

To call your best friends
by their schoolboy names
and give them kisses goodbye,
to turn her head away when they say
Your wife! So your confidence grows.
She doesn't ask what you want
because she knows.

Isn't that what you think?

When actually she was only waiting
to be told *Take off your dress*—
to be stunned, and then do this,
never rehearsed, but perfectly obvious:
in one motion up, over, and gone,
the X of her arms crossing and uncrossing,
her face flashing away from you in the fabric
so that you couldn't say if she was
appearing or disappearing.

—Deborah Gottlieb Garrison

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Mummy Doctor and her sister call each other Dub Dub and Dib Dib. "Oh but surely, Dub Dub, Beethoven's violin concerto is old hat nowadays. Surely no one *discovers* Beethoven now. After all, we discovered him years ago. Remember our gyrations to the old windup gramophone." Dib Dib's toast-crumbed knife plunges across to the square of hitherto untouched butter on its little painted saucer.

The sisters have used the names since they were small children, and they are quite shameless with them. In the street, in shops, and on buses and trains.

"Angle? Bangle? Love Auntie Dib Dib?"

"Of course they do. They *adore* you. You must know that."

"And you, Dub Dub, you know I absolutely adore them."

"It's Dib Dib's long-weekend hols," Mummy Doctor explains to me. The house is full of pet names which, of course, I do not use. I mean, how can I.

Dib Dib is housemistress at a boarding school for girls. She will come again when I have to go to the nursing home to have my baby. This way, Mummy Doctor has already explained, she will be able to keep her post in the university department. Dib Dib will be coming back when she is needed, and there is nothing for me to worry about. Dib Dib is good fun, the doctors have told me.

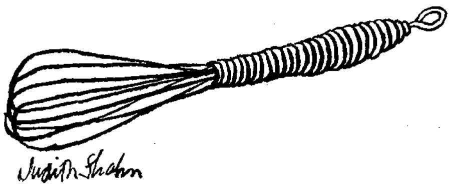
The sisters do not look alike. Dib Dib, though much younger than Mummy Doctor, is much bigger. Very tall, with enormous thighs, she gives an impression of hugeness. When I look at her it seems as if I am seeing her without clothes on. She is big in that way.

Dib Dib has an appetite. In the kitchen she pops things into her mouth during preparation and has often eaten most of the meal before it reaches the table. Boarding school, the two doctors explain to me, makes you hungry. Dib Dib attacks the butter saucer as if without any thought that it might be sacred.

"J'ai une petite few pensées extrorodinaire," Dib Dib confides to her sister while biting heartily into an enormous slice of breakfast toast. "Dub Dub, I mean, en français, *Doub Doub,*" she says as she washes down the toast with a long drink of the orange juice that is meant for the little girls and for me because of my baby. "*Doub Doub,*" she says, "avez-vous considered les dangereusements de t.b.? Je mean vous bringez an autre dans la famille?" I look down at my plate.

"Alors! Non, Dib Dib. Elle est straight d'ospital so we feel considerably au secours, savez? Staff t.b. testé, vouz comprenez? A l'ospital they would know, n'est-ce pas?"

To add to this way of trying to talk so that I shall not understand, Dib Dib turns to me and tells me that what I need is a three-mile walk after break-



Judith Shahn

fast, and she will supervise it if I can be spared for half an hour. She raises an eyebrow in the direction of the Doctors as if to ask their permission.

I don't think that I can walk three miles in half an hour, I tell them. Not now. I feel tears coming to my eyes, so I leave the table and go to the kitchen and start on the washing up.

I walk slowly, closely watching the hedges: the laurel, the privet, the rhododendron, and the holly, the evergreens. Dib Dib is alongside. I watch the hedges, mainly the places low down near the earth, trying to think of something other than this walk. There is a cold wind that makes my face ache. My real tears can mix secretly with the tears made by the wind. I think the cold has made Dib Dib's face ache too, because just before we reached the little park at the far end of Clifton Way, she said, "Right about turn, Vera."

IT'S NOT MUCH FARTHER, BOB. I LIVE JUST AROUND THIS NEXT CORNER, AT HOWDY AND CLARABELL.
KRAMDEN
NORTON
ZIEGLER
NOSTALGIAVILLE

"I expect I am too slow for you," I tell her on the way back.

It is my bath night. My turn for the bath. Looking into the hedges, I long for my hot bath and then the warmth in bed afterwards. Out here by the hedges my bedroom is a sanctuary with a number of hours to go through before I can get to it.

IN the afternoon Daddy Doctor says he will take Angie and Barbie to see the rocks in his department so that Dib and Dub can play at being sisters together.

Mummy Doctor suggests I have a couple of hours to myself. "A nice rest with a book." She smiles at me. I tell her, "Thank you," and go upstairs.

The gray sky presses down on the winter trees. It seems that spring will never come, that my baby will never be born. I can hear music from downstairs. They must be playing some records in the study. I open my door and go halfway downstairs to try to hear.

"It's Albéniz—'Tango,' " Dib Dib is saying. "I love it."

"An expressive counterpoint," Mummy Doctor starts to say.

"Oh Dub Dub! Always so mathematical. Why can't you be more romantic. Listen! Wonderful melodic music. Can't you feel the ductile movement? . . . " Dib Dib's voice changes suddenly, and she sounds as if she is crying. It is a kind of howl. She has burst into tears in the middle of the tango.

"Oh Dub Dub," she sobs, "it takes two to tango. I know it's a cliché, but it's really true, that statement. What's wrong with me? Am I really so hideous?"

I go down three more stairs. The gramophone has been stopped.

"Why can't I be married with a nice husband and children and a house—like yours?" Dib Dib says between her sobs. "I'm so sick of being housemistress. I hate boarding school. I really do."

As I move quickly back upstairs I hear the low beginnings of Mummy Doctor's voice as she starts to comfort Dib Dib.

Back in my room I lie on my bed and stare at the darkening afternoon. There is a soft tap-tapping at my door, and Mummy Doctor's voice is asking me if I will make a pot of tea please and bring it to the study.

AS it is clear that I never help myself to the butter, and as it is clear, too, that they will never confront Dib Dib with any form of reproach about her taking such a lot, I feel quite safe in going downstairs very quietly, after they have all gone to bed, and eating a thick slice of bread spread with butter as thick as the bread itself. I help myself to a second slice and take it and the orange juice back upstairs to bed.

This Dib Dib and Dub Dub! If I ever could see Dr. Metcalf again—I mean, suppose, just supposing it were possible and I met him in the little park at the end of Clifton Way, past all the hedges, the laurel, the privet, the rhododendrons, and the holly, and if I did talk about Dib Dib and Dub Dub, he would not begin to understand what I was talking about.

Already I am in a different world.

II

MY mother has come to visit me. She has brought some lilies of the valley, her favorite flowers, in a small green vase shaped like a stork.

Helena is in a little wicker cradle half hidden by a screen at the foot of my bed. I almost make a cruel remark that I suppose my mother is trying to pretend that the stork brought Helena. Perhaps the hardest thing is not having any visitors—I mean not having a husband or the baby's father to come. The other women have husbands who are also the fathers of their babies.

"My baby's father is dead," I tell one of the women when she asks me. After that she does not say anything else. I lie far down under the blanket during the times when visitors are allowed. I try to read. I hope Helena will not go on crying. She has been drawing attention to us both and to the empty chair beside my bed.

She cries the whole day, the first day of her life, a heartbroken crying, as if she knows straight away some secret awful thing about the world into which she has come.

"Why does she cry so?" My mother's eyes fill with tears. She holds Helena, trying to quieten her. I see something about my mother then, something that must have belonged in her life and that I have never seen before. She tells me she has brought a present. I unwrap small pink knitted things. They look like dolls' clothes.

"The clothes are very sweet." I try to thank my mother. I did not expect her to come. Her journey will have been quite long and complicated. Two buses and a train, as well as the walk to and from the buses. I try to thank her for coming.

Suddenly it is quite dark outside, and snowflakes are whirling about against the panes of the tall window. I think how it will be when I have to leave the nursing home with Helena. My mother is saying she is glad I have called my baby Helena. It will be easier for her to spell when she goes to school. She sees that I am looking at the darkened sky and the whirling snowflakes.

"It's not settling," she says, and she says she is sure it will be sunshine again in a few minutes.

Before my baby was born I called her Beatrice.

"No one calls anyone Beatrice nowadays," my mother says. She says do I realize that over a hundred churches in England are called after St. Helena because of a certain Helena who, while she was on a pilgrimage, dug up the True Cross in the Holy Land. "Imagine," my mother says, "her having the good sense to take a spade in her luggage." My mother says she has always liked the idea of a pilgrimage.

"You certainly made one to come here today," I say. Helena is actually quiet for a few moments, and my mother looks at me again, the tears welling up in her blue eyes.

"No," I say, as if she has spoken. "I can't come home to you. I don't want you to sell your house and move because of me. I shan't come, so don't do anything silly."

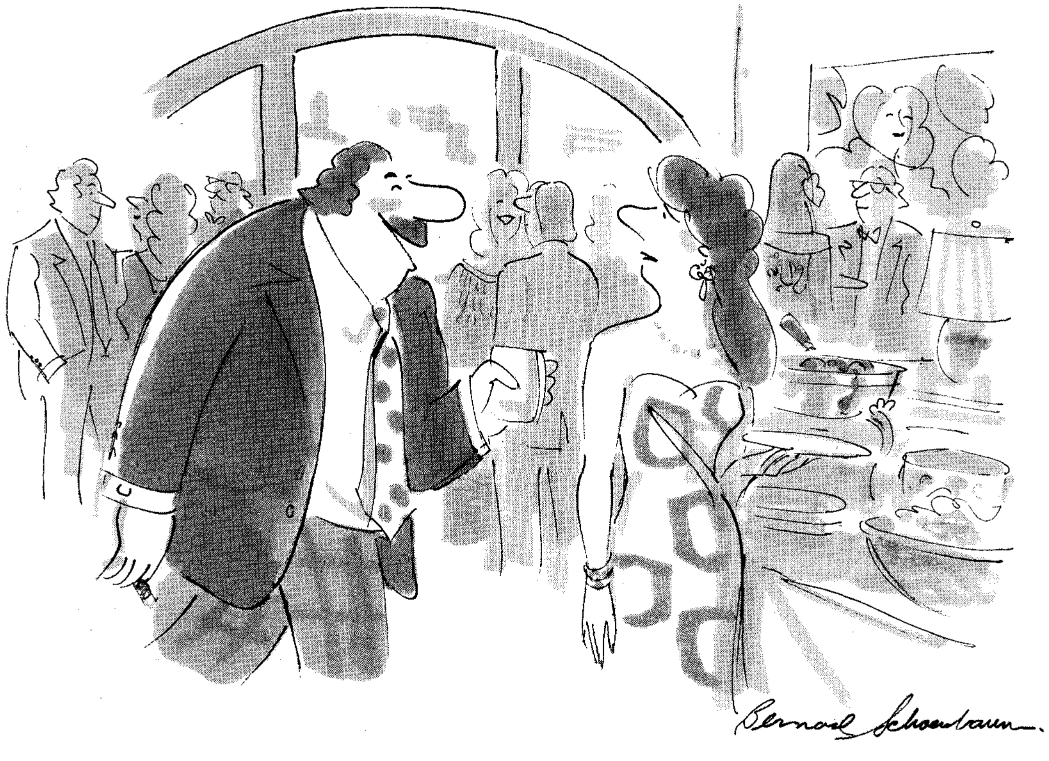
Before she leaves my mother stuffs some pound notes into my purse.

I hold my baby. She is newborn and small and wrinkled with grief. I hold her close to my face and feel her soft skin. She smells clean, of Vinolia soap.

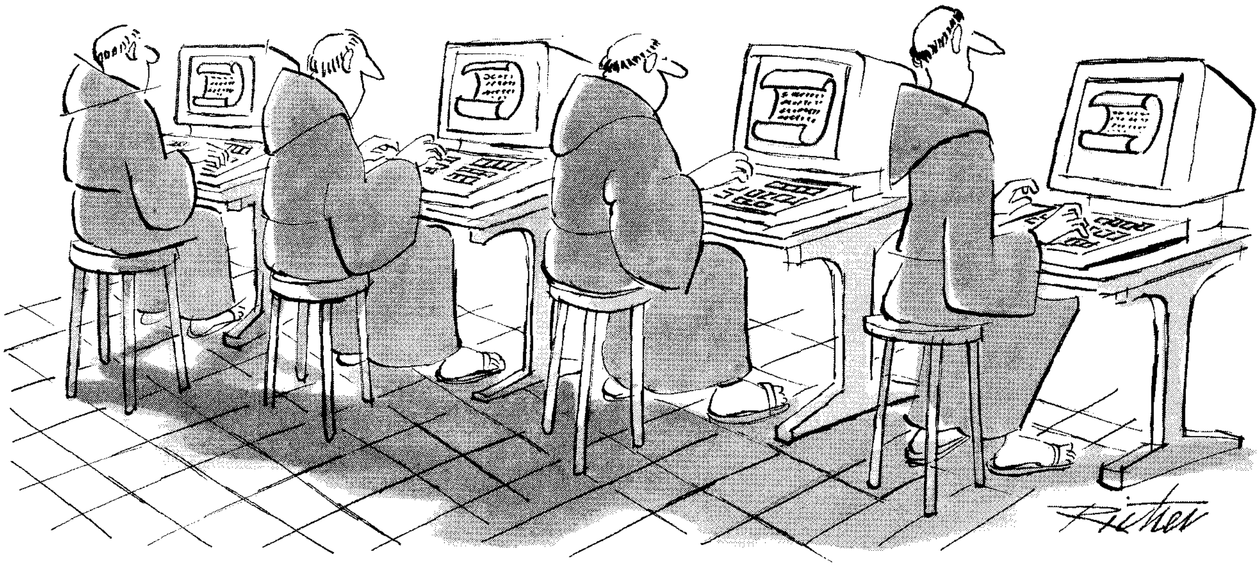
I CAN'T eat my dinner. I keep crying even though I'm hungry. I do not want Sister Peters to think that I don't like her meal, and I ask her how she makes the gravy so that it is thick and dark. I try to ask her but I cry instead. Sister Peters, trying to be kind, asks if I have a picture of Helena's daddy, and I say I haven't. She wants to know if I have a letter or anything belonging to him that I could look at, and I say no, I haven't, and I go on crying.

Sister Peters moves me into a small room before the evening visitors come. She says I can have the room to myself. She says lots of women have a good cry after childbirth, and she says I'm not to worry about anything. She fetches the pudding from the dinner tray. It is a little steamed ginger pudding with treacle and custard. It is very nice, and I ask her how she makes all the little puddings like this. She explains that she has a whole lot of cups without handles and she uses them to make the puddings. While she talks to me she changes Helena and admires her and says she's very intelligent, with a well-shaped head, long fingers, and aristocratic limbs. It comforts me to hear these things. I feel I want to tell Sister Peters that Helena is Dr. Metcalf's little girl. But of course I can't.

Sister Peters says I should have a tablet and go to sleep early. She says she will put



"Eddie Wilson, for conversation in the lighter vein."



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Helena's cradle in her own room for the night.

She tells me that her husband has just bought two hundred scrubbing brushes. "He's sitting in the kitchen now," she says, "trying to work out a way to sell them and the two hundred buckets he . . . " She pauses. "Two hundred buckets," she says, "that came with the brushes. They're all flawed," she says. "There's something wrong with every one. He's got to find two hundred people who won't notice the flaw. . . . Imagine!" Sister Peters gives me a tablet.

I HAVE one more week of my month, paid for by my mother, at the Hilda Street Wentworth nursing home.

"The little white collars—I love them," says Sister Peters.

"The little white collars?" My mouth is full.

"Yes. You know, the little lint collars you've made." Sister Peters' mouth is full also. She tells me I am the first person to do her castor-oil bottles like this. She has in the past, she says, had various nursing assistants, but not one of them ever cleaned out the medicine cupboard.

I have washed and polished the glass water jugs, too, and Sister Peters is pleased. She says the medicine cupboard is a treat, quite different now—not swimming in castor oil, for one thing, and there's a lot more space now the empties have been thrown out.

"This cheese," Sister Peters says. "It's mousetrap but it's not bad, not bad at all." She has a rabbit sitting on her lap. We are all—Sister Peters and her husband, Mr. Hoob Peters, and me—sitting by the kitchen range eating our cheese ration at one go. Sister Peters fancied a cheese-and-pickle supper. We have a whole square of cheese each and some new brown bread.

"No pickles for you!" Sister Peters says to me. "They'll turn your milk. Hoob!" she says to Mr. Peters. "She mustn't have pickles."

"If we had strawberries"—Mr. Peters forks the onion off my plate onto his—"you wouldn't be able to have them, either."

"Bad for your milk." Sister Peters jumps up then, pushing the rabbit off her lap. "Look at that, will you. Wet me right through." The rabbit, with her heavy undercarriage, hops towards a corner of the kitchen.

"She's due any minute, I'd say." Sister Peters nods towards the rabbit and tells Mr. Peters he should get on with the hutch. They are going to keep rabbits, as they keep the fowls, Sister Peters explains, to put toward the patients' food. She has to feed the patients well, and it is quite a struggle to do this.

For the last three days I have been helping in the nursing home, carrying basins of warm water to the lying-in mothers, changing babies, carrying away basins to empty them, and preparing the hot baths for the mothers who are now able to get up for a bath. Not only do all the glass jugs on the bedside lockers sparkle but all the brass taps and window fittings in the big old-fashioned bathroom are bright and shining; especially in the late afternoon these taps really glow. I have polished them too. I have fed the fowls twice now for Mr. Peters, and I told him I would like to weed his vegetables. I feel much stronger. I enjoyed cleaning the medicine cupboard; in the sharp fragrance of the medicines and the antiseptic lotions on the lower shelf, I felt restored and happy, and Helena slept peacefully, for once, while I was busy.

I do not want to go back to the house in Clifton Way.

"I don't want to go back to the Wellingtons," I say suddenly to Sister Peters and Mr. Peters. "Can't I stay here with you and help with the work?"

Sister Peters shakes her head. "There's two reasons," she says. "One is simply that I can't afford to pay anyone, and the other is that I was at school with Gladys and she would be upset thinking that I've taken you away from her."

"There's never more than one reason, one real reason," Mr. Peters interrupts. "A person can't have two reasons that really matter," he says, "and this real reason is that we can't pay. You don't give a damn about the Wellington woman. You never liked her at school, you've said so yourself."

"All the same, Hoob, she'll think . . . "

"Bugger what *she* thinks! Vera here might like to sell the buckets and the scrubbing brushes, it's up to her. . . . "

"Oh really, Hoob! Of course she can't. Do have some sense for once. Those buckets and scrubbing brushes, she can't eat them or live in them."

"I don't mind not being paid, really I don't," I say. "Please let me stay here, please. I can't go back there."

I HELP Sister Peters take the six babies round to their mothers for the ten-o'clock feed before going to sit in the small room, which is almost like a cupboard, to feed Helena. I want to stay here with Helena. I feel I cannot face, in spite of all the kindness, that other house. Mummy Doctor has been to see me several times, bringing crayoned pages for Helena from Angie and Barbie, and some little clothes, pretty treasures, saved from when the little girls were newly born. And one time she brought a surprise parcel, some clothes she made in secret, perhaps sitting up in bed late at night in the quietness of the sleeping household with Daddy Doctor snoring politely on his side of the bed.

Daddy Doctor and Mummy Doctor, the Wellingtons, would never eat cheese the way we have eaten cheese this evening. Mummy Doctor would make a thin cheese sauce to pour over some boiled carrots or onions. Or she would mash a tablespoon of grated cheese into a saucepan of boiled potatoes. Or she would cut some cheese in thin slices, almost like paper, and toast it on very thick slices of bread. The cheese would be made to seem endless, the only trouble being that no one would know it was there at all.

I do not really want to think of them while I am here in this place, but I do keep thinking of them like this: Daddy Doctor and Mummy Doctor. Their separate pillows, when I was in their house, were always indented neatly where their heads, well ordered, in separate hollows, had been all night.

The Peters' bed is hardly ever made. One of them is nearly always in it, mostly Mr. Peters, snatching a nap, as Sister Peters calls it. The babies are often born at night. Sister Peters says the only thing Mr. Peters is reliable about is when he says he's going for a sleep. Their bedroom opens off the kitchen. Sister Peters says it's best to be downstairs. She can bring troublesome babies down there at night.

Before I go to bed I go down to the kitchen, quietly, and set the six trays for the patients' breakfasts, and I cut a neat plate of bread and butter, which I cover with a clean damp cloth.

Back upstairs in my small room I write a letter to Mummy Doctor telling her I am not able to come back and will she please send on my trunk, which is all packed, to this address. If I post my letter first thing in the morning the doctors and Dib Dib (whose special leave from school is about to end) will receive it in the afternoon post.

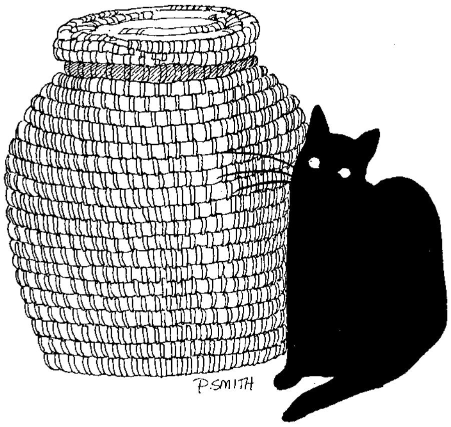
IN the morning, when I set the trays, I search the sideboard for the best spoons and I choose cups that are not chipped and that have saucers to match. I am pleased with the neat breakfast trays, and I roll up the sleeves of the overall Sister Peters has lent me. With an extra-high rolling up of the sleeves I feel efficient. We have just admitted an emergency, a multipara premature, a seventh child. I go to answer the front door with Helena tucked carelessly under my arm, dangling in her shawl, as the midwives carry the babies.

"The head's on the perineum," I tell Dr. McCabe. She, with her black bag, sweeps past me and goes straight upstairs.

"Vera!" Sister Peters calls over the bannister. "The Emergency is worried about her rhubarb jam. Tell Hoob, will you, to go round to her house on the bike and turn off the gas. Her back door's open."

Dr. McCabe isn't such a snowstorm after all. She actually smiled when I opened the front door. She was not bad at my delivery, either, though for the last part I was hysterical and had to be put out, or under, as they say. That was not McCabe's fault.

THE new woman, the one with the rhubarb jam, is resting uneasily after her seventh boy. She cries when I give her a bowl of warm water for a wash. She wished, she says, for a girl.



"What did *you* get?" She looks up at me, her eyes overflowing with tears.

"A girl." My voice an apology, sounding vague, as if I'm not really sure what I gave birth to. She understands, though, and weeps afresh.

"People often cry after childbirth," I say.

"I should know," she says. "I'm the only one here with a boy."

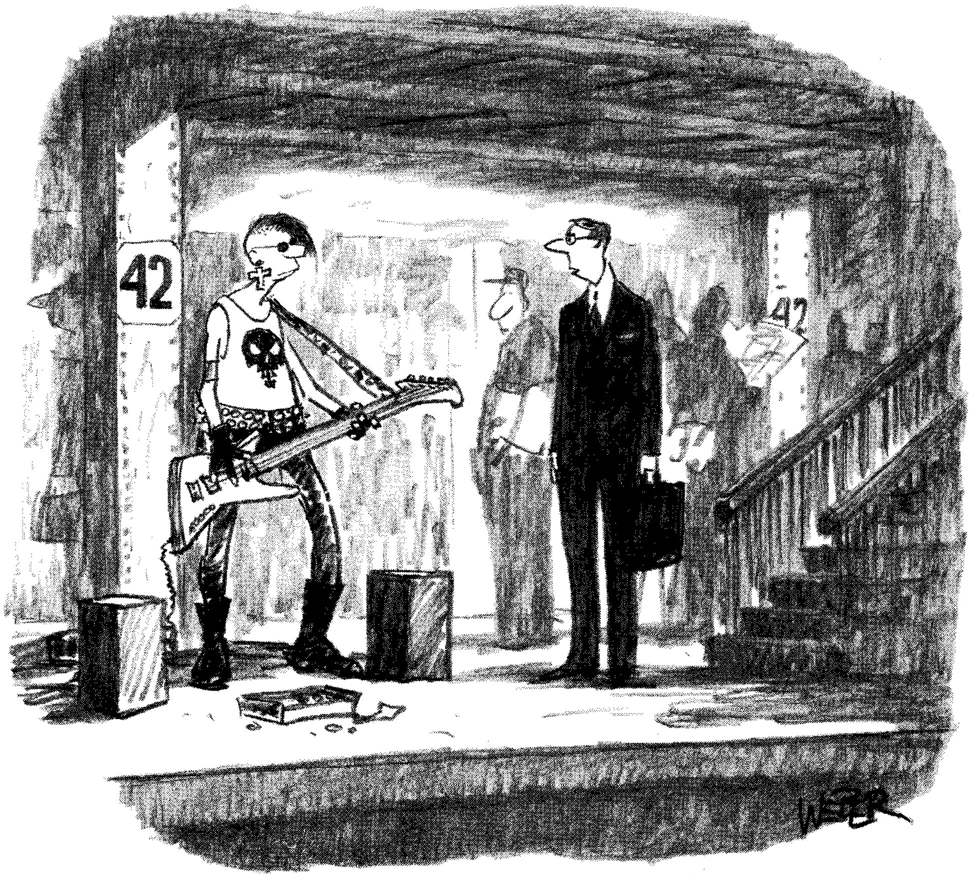
"They come in runs," I say. I've heard Sister Peters say this too. "All boys and then all girls. Uncanny. Really."

The new baby gets called Rhubarb Jam by everyone.

It is sunny in the garden and for half an hour, a little gift of time, I thin out and transplant some tiny cabbage plants. My knees make hollows in the warm earth, and the doves in Mr. Peters' dovecote, a ramshackle affair that Sister Peters declares should be taken down before it collapses, talk to and fro softly—a contented murmuring that reminds me of the tiny gulping noises the new babies make when they are feeding all at the same time.

Because of working in the garden whenever I have the chance, my legs and arms are already sunburned, and I feel stronger every day. I work very quickly with the cabbages and splash some water on them. I can hear Helena crying in the kitchen. I have her little cot in there every day now. Trying to keep ahead with the work and trying to squeeze in little extra things like working in the garden, I am, all the time, evading the burden which is on my mind. And this is the burden of the Doctors and my not going back to them as arranged. Any day now I shall have to receive a reply to the letter I sent them. I dread the arrival of the postman, and, worse, a visit from Mummy Doctor. The Doctors pay me with a check every month, and I fully understand that this way of being paid requires a month's notice on both sides when it comes to leaving or being asked to leave. If I look beyond the immediate there is the question of where I can go with Helena if Sister Peters refuses to have me stay. It really may not be possible for her to manage to keep me. I am, for one thing, taking up the tiny room she likes to keep for emergencies or for special reasons. It would be easier if Sister Peters would say either that she wants me to go because she can't keep me, or that she hopes I'll stay because

I'm useful and she can't manage without me.



"It's people like you who are ruining rock and roll for the rest of us."

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THE next morning I am in the kitchen. Sister Peters is upstairs. Both the labor rooms are in use and Dr. McCabe is on her way. Mr. Peters has been putting up some shelving, which, he says, he picked up for peanuts. The kitchen is in a mess with tools and dust and plaster everywhere. I have Helena under one arm and I am stirring a big saucepan of soup made from the carcasses of two boiling fowls and some cut-up onions and carrots and potatoes. I cover the saucepan with a tea towel to stop the dust falling into it. Mr. Peters' drill is screaming, and Helena, who is not yet bathed and fed, is crying, when suddenly two stout women in navy-blue outdoor uniforms wheel their bicycles up to the back door. They come into the kitchen without knocking. One of them explains that no one answered the front door, and the other one says they have come to see me and my baby. Immediately I feel afraid of them. Mr. Peters turns off the drill and explains about the shelves. They ignore him and ask me what am I doing and why am I standing at the hot stove holding the baby and will I prepare her bath as they want to see me bath the baby. They will need to see the cot, too—*if* she has one. I understand at once that they are health visitors checking on me; I understand, too, that Mummy Doctor will have been obliged to tell them where I am.

The two health visitors poke about the kitchen and examine everything. They look in at the Peters' bedroom and mutter to each other. I show them Helena's little cot—not too clean this morning, and pushed in behind the kitchen door. With great speed I prepare the small zinc bath that I now use for her. For the last three days I have bathed her in the kitchen in front of the range.

The two visitors sit, knees apart, skirts stretched, on kitchen chairs, and watch me bath my baby. They watch me feed her. They each, in turn, pass a hand over her little round head and mutter in low sinister voices about the anterior fontanelle.

"You haven't spoken to your baby at all, not the whole time we've been here," one of them accuses. "You used to handling babies? Eh? You had several? Paid for your pleasure with pain, eh? Didn't think of that, did you? Can't have the one without the other, can you!"

Only this one. I want to tell them. Only this one.

Where's her daddy, they want to know next. Even though they will have all the details.

"He's dead—you say he's dead? We've heard that one before, haven't we." They nod knowingly, lips in thin lines and chins pressed down and back.

I change Helena to the other breast.

"Oh ho! That's a quick change. Not much milk, I see. Losing your milk, eh?"

They want to know why I am still in the private nursing home. Surely I was booked in for the two weeks only, just for the lying-in and not the whole expensive month. "Who's paying?" they want to know. "Your mother paid, you say. Did she now! Private nursing home! That's a very generous mother you have, or is it your Gentleman Friend, is it? Is that who's paying?"

They sit square on their chairs looking at me.

"You seem very experienced," one of them says, "handling this baby. Much too quick and easy with the baby. Can't believe it's a first. Are the others here with you?"

"That's enough!" Mr. Peters, in the corner with his toolbox, stands up suddenly. "She's a nurse—that's because and why." His voice is unlike his usual voice.

"Oh Uncle, there you are," I say, surprised at my own words. "Uncle, I didn't know you were still here in the kitchen. Could you please hold Helena for a few minutes? I must see to the soup." My legs are shaking and I feel I will cry.

Mr. Peters holds out his dirty hands.

"Come to Uncle Hooby," he says. "Come along to Uncle Hoob." He takes Helena and holds her up to his face and then puts her against his shoulder and pats her back gently.

"Clear up the bath quick, then, Vera," he says to me. "Her ladyship, your Auntie, will be down soon. Her and the doctor will be through upstairs soon, and they'll be down here looking for a bite of lunch." He turns to the health visitors.

"You two ladies like a bowl of soup?" He jerks his head in the direction of my enormous saucepan. The visitors scrape their chairs on the tiles as they get up; they do not want soup, thank you. They must be on their way. Thank you very much!

Mr. Peters jogs Helena on his arm and guides them to the door.

"Call in any time," he tells them. "Vera's stopping with us, her *folks*, for the time being. She'll be here for a while. Just you call in whenever you're passing. Always welcome! Bowl of soup or a cuppa tea. Any time you're passing."

He closes the door firmly on them and peers through the lace curtain.

"Bitch One and Bitch Two, excuse my French," he says. "Pity!" he turns from the window. "Pity!" he says. "I've missed a sale. Should've flogged 'em a bucket and brush each." He walks up and down the kitchen, still holding Helena. He keeps laughing, little laughs.

RHUBARB JAM has his own pram. The eldest of the seven boys pushed it round and left it ready for when his mother and the new baby could come home. Sister Peters suggests I put Helena in the pram and go for a walk. She says to go to the park and back—just half an hour, she says, it will do me good. One of the other babies won't settle after her feed, so Sister Peters puts her in the pram, too. Two babies, like dolls in a dolls' pram.

"Bring back some dandelion leaves," she calls out after me. Walking with the pram, with the two babies flat on the mattress, tucked in a piece of flannelette sheet and both of them quiet in the smooth movement, is one of the nicest things I have ever done. I never imagined it would be like this to push a pram. It is a high pram with big wheels, a bit shabby, but the shabbiness makes it less conspicuous.

When I pause to cross a side street, I hear, in the distance through the faint roar of the city's breathing, the chiming of the clocks. An old woman pauses, too, and peers into the pram and tells me that I have beautiful children. Twins, she supposes, and very, very young. So I tell her, "Yes."

WILL

This morning the hibiscus is in bloom, so I stayed in bed late
thinking of ways to repair the wall & kill my mother—
muscle relaxants
vets use to put dogs away painlessly or perhaps a pillow,
but that's too Shakespearean, anything to deliver her from
the daily supermarket of misery—children reeking of sex abuse,
old men & women risen from piss-stained rubber sheets & diapers
gliding ever so slowly up & down the aisles, snails
in trails of their own urine. Visiting her at the home
where she's hardly moved or spoken for months,
I could feel her consciousness, not closer but shallower,
as though she were evaporating underneath, slipping away,
shallowing out.
"Mother," I cried, "I miss you." "I miss me, too." She smiled.

When I was a child we summered on the shore. That's me
in my sailor suit with a Raggedy Andy doll. Mother
stayed inside, painting, painting. What? Who knows? Shadows
on walls.
She was the world's first abstract depressionist. Oh,
one got used to her self-demeaning manner which was really
criticism in disguise, her malignant negativities
unspoken & sudden disappearances. That was taken when
the whole family rode a glass-topped railway carriage
all the way across the Rockies. We stayed with a cousin
in Seattle
who showed us a slum. You are as old as I was then &
I am as old as my father was when he divorced my mother.
What does that prove? Nothing, probably, except the mind's
tireless need for symmetries.

I was eight when Father bought me
my first Kodak. I took careful note of each exposure. Now
it's automatic, the f-stop, the aperture depending only
upon depth of field. Still, I try to keep the light,
positive approach, humorous & inhumane, knowing
all the while
my insights are brilliant lies, all lies—the fearless quest
for the fatuous—as though we were all aesthetic objects
to be handled with tongs. This photograph's the embodiment
of my mother's will—flowers raging in the garden,
her shadow & that man standing among Fiesta ware & anger
which puts nails in the eyes, my father. While I no longer
believe a father
is someone who brings fire down from the skies, I never fail to cry
over the passage where Coleridge holds his son, Hartley,
up to the moon
so he'll always associate it with happiness. Yes, he's my rod
& she's my staff & neither of them comforts me.

This X-ray
shows
the dual shadows forming—a cloud, a kidney, a stone—
you can fill in the signifiers & even though we sometimes
confuse
occasion with cause, all comes home to roost in the bed
of the cursed progenitor—first fire, then the flood.

Before the First World War, her mother, my grandmother,
worked in the Dixon pencil factory & when the local gigolo
deserted her she prayed to Joseph & the B.V.M. to send her
a husband
& they did—a carpenter from the basement storeroom,
& Mother arrived soon after. Still, in photographs, as in life,
the more you figure out the more you are puzzled by
the space between—discontinuities—& dream some completion,
sacrificing everything for the perfect moment: Cartier-
Bresson's Zen snapshots of eternity or Weston riding the cusp
of the last frozen wave—that perpetual scream
that is the siren to our silence.

Anyway, there I stood,
knee-deep
in begonias, a brick in each hand, unable to think,
trapped inside the bottomless bad infinity
of a woman's unhappiness, when my neighbor's golden retriever
fishes from the pond the gray cat—so innocent of everything.
Animal griefs are cumulative—each little death
adding to the others because in itself somehow so incomplete.
I took this picture, then buried it & went inside to weep
for it, for us, for God. . . .

My last visit,
I waved the Living Will before him. "Doctor, I am now
my own mother. Her death is my death." He didn't blink.
I guess they get used to it. But it's clear she's crossed
some line—
like a dark horse gradually becoming visible.
It leaves me feeling that after-the-funeral energy
before the funeral's even occurred—the desire to dust light
fixtures, scrub floors, rebuild this wall. Last night,
I dreamed
her severed hands, her breasts. Look, you can see
how incredibly beautiful she's become, if motionless, mute.
Her eyes flickering slightly in the flash & mouth
moving only
when I raise the glass of root beer to her lips.
Her skin has taken on the waxy pallor of saints in decay
as slowly she shows me all the colors of her dying.
Each visit, while she dozes, I pass time with the woman
in the wheelchair
who smokes platonic cigarettes & is always late,
or else listen to the Alice-in-Wonderland logic
of the man who once wrote the seminal book on that brilliant
Victorian loony who photographed little girls on water—
tactfully avoiding all the while the lingering scent
of sweet Mrs. Benvolio, the shit machine. Sometimes
I wonder
what's in her mind. I know we're all a stone's throw away
from satori—that the only illumination is
there's no illumination. The mystery's not what will be
but what has been. Tomorrow, I'll bring her *Good Housekeeping*
just for the Dada of it & this picture of her as a baby,
held in her mother's arms, while her father, my namesake, stands
in black behind her.

—L. S. Asekoff

"You will have your hands full," she says and I tell her, "Yes." We smile knowingly at each other. She fumbles with her purse and drops two florins into the pram.

"Silver," she says. "It's an old custom for a baby boy. You have one of each, I see the pink and the blue. I can't give to one and not the other, can I." We smile once more, knowingly, at one another.

I am the mother, the mother of twins, a boy and a girl. Back home music can be heard, an arrangement of the wedding march for the piano, by Liszt—piano music can be heard through the open French windows, the maid is making cucumber sandwiches for afternoon tea, and my husband, the twins' daddy, will be home from the office. . . . Daddy will be home to bath you both tonight. . . . Perhaps Daddy will be home early from the operating theatre. . . . He will leave his dressers to sew up. . . . Not the office, the theatre. . . .

In the field at the edge of the park I hastily gather some dandelion leaves. I take off my cardigan and roll it up with the leaves inside and put the bundle across the foot of the pram.

In the afternoon post there is a letter for me.

Sister Peters says, "There's a letter for you, Vera." She has taken the post up to the patients; mine is on the kitchen table. Sister Peters has made the tea. She pours a cup for me.

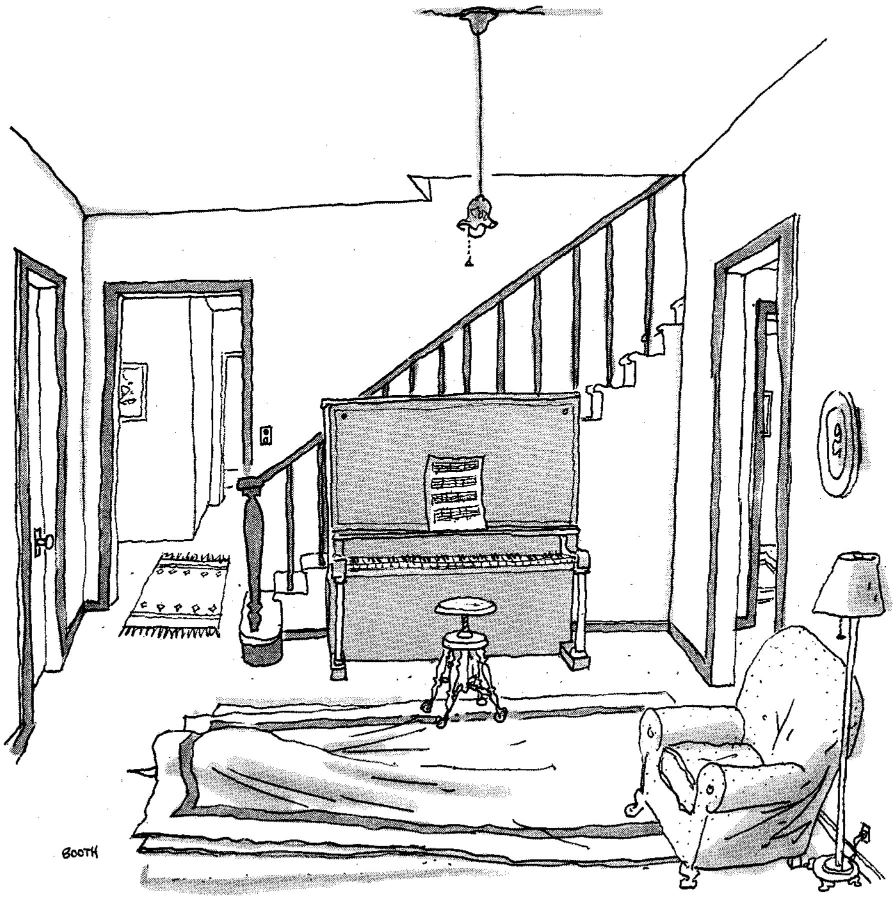
I do not want to open the letter. I know it to be the reply from Mummy Doctor. Slowly I open the envelope. The letter is very short. It is from the Nurses' Insurance Company explaining in the politest phrases that a payment to a nurse in my circumstances can be made only once. With the letter is a check for four pounds.

"What's this for?" Sister Peters takes the check and holds it between one scrubbed red finger and her red thumb.

"For my food," I say. Sister Peters can have up to six mothers and their babies. I am causing her to have seven.

"Aw! Go on with you! You don't owe me anything," she says. "It's yours. Put it away for now and pay it into your bank quick before *Uncle Hoob* gets his paws on it."

Mr. Peters is trying to fix one of his new shelves. Sister Peters explains it



Thursday, August 2, 1990, Early in the Morning, the Watternods' Dog Ponders the S. & L. Mess

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came away from the wall as soon as the saucepans were put up.

"Everything slid off," she says. "I've laughed myself silly. Oh God! I'm that tired!" She tells me to take the trays with the little teapots, all filled from the big teapot, round to the patients.

When I open the rabbit hutch later on to feed the rabbit with some of the dandelion leaves, I count six baby rabbits. In all, eight births in one day at the Hilda Street Wentworth. A record. How soon can a rabbit be pregnant again? Sister Peters wants to know.

"Mr. Peters not back yet?" Sister Peters, still in her hat and coat, is prising the slats of wood from a small crate, a present from a grateful husband. "Prunes," she says. "That's nice. Very useful." She takes a glistening wrinkled prune and eats it, explaining that she's sorry she's late back. She missed the bus, she says, because of nipping into someone's front garden after some dandelion leaves just as the bus was coming.

"Mr. Peters," she says. "He should be here by now. You didn't give him that money? Did you? You didn't lend him the money?"

"What money?" I am pushing the patients' plates down in the big bowl of soapy water we keep in readiness in the old-fashioned sink.

"The money. The four pounds you got." Sister Peters is serving a plate of dark, gravied stew for me and one for herself. "You didn't let him have it? He's a fool with money."

"No," I tell her, "I didn't give any money to him. I've still got the four pounds."

"Never lend him any money," she says. Her long hungry fingers seek out another prune, which she hands to me. "He's a good man," she says, "but a damn fool with money. Well, I can't *do anything*," she adds. "Sit down and have your lunch. Never lend Mr. Peters money. And another thing, before I forget. Your things are coming—there was a message last night. Late. They're sending your trunk. And don't you forget, never lend Mr. Peters money. Since you'll be staying, just remember that."

We eat in silence, quickly. It seems suddenly that the food has never been so good before. I'm eating too fast because the relief is almost more than I can bear.

"Last time," Sister Peters says, "we got a tub of butter, and now prunes. With their first we got a whole Danish cheese. Imagine! Patients have their ways of being grateful. And that reminds me, there's some presents for you."

"For me?"

"Yes, for you, why not. You've done a lot. There's a pair of stockings, pure silk, for you, and a dress length, and the cost of having it made up is to be covered. That's nice, isn't it."

Sister Peters unwraps the material. "It's very nice," she says. "Good quality. It'll suit you. It'll be the devil to iron, you'll have to have it just right, not too damp and not too dry. It'll hang well. Keep it for best. I'd keep it for best."

"Yes," I say. "I never imagined presents."

The material is linen, a navy-blue background with a pattern of pale-green and white flowers. A better quality than anything I have ever possessed. It occurs to me that the presents from the patients could all be for Sister Peters if I were not here.

Upstairs once more, I rush round with six bedpans and the six little enamel jugs of the Dettol-and-warm-water mixture. These jugs, the little douchings, are poured with the usual jokes about plucked chickens and being ripped to ribbons.

At last I get to my room. Helena has been crying. I could hear her despair all along the passage. When I pick her up I see her little face is swollen, red and puffy with crying. As quickly as I can I sit down, facing the window, to feed her. The traffic is pouring both ways on Hilda Street. Perhaps tomorrow I shall be able to go on the early bus to visit my mother. Tomorrow my trunk will arrive, by carrier, without a visit from the Doctors. As I rest, holding Helena upright and patting her tiny back, I hear Mr. Peters come in. "Oh, if it isn't Uncle Hoob!" I hear Sister Peters say.

"Uncle!" says Mr. Peters. "Isn't she a sharp one? Me, Uncle! Helena has no need to worry with a mother like she's got." —Elizabeth Jolley

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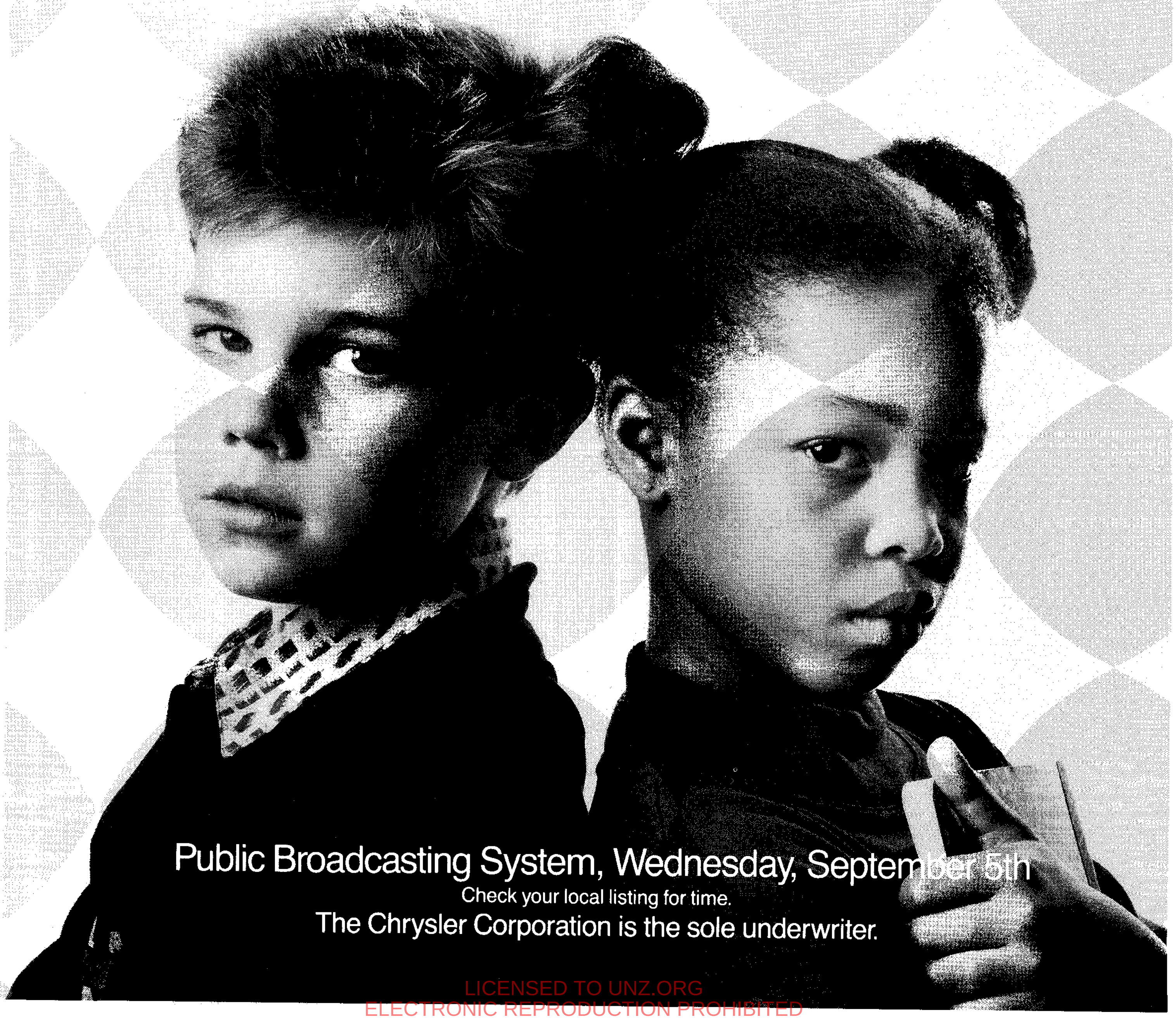

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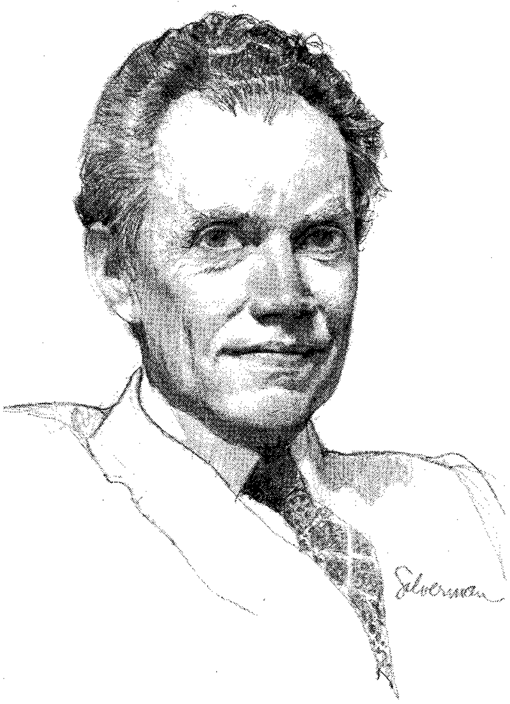
PROFILES

FOR THE NATION

A FEW seasons ago, as I yawned my way through the interminable second act of "The Phantom of the Opera," it occurred to me that theatre—real theatre—had somehow escaped from the stage. The basic theatrical impulse wasn't up there in front of the footlights anymore, I thought; it had got loose and was at large in the world. This fanciful notion came back to me with a rush one morning last November, when I found myself listening to J. Carter Brown, the director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., present to a group of high-level corporate executives from Merrill Lynch the *scenario for an exhibition* called "Circa 1492." His talk was a virtuoso performance, replete with skills *and throwaway lines that few other* museum directors in this country can command. Carter Brown, tall, lean, faultlessly dressed, and utterly at ease, kept letting his voice fall to such a low decibel level that his listeners had to strain to hear him, a device I always used to associate with John Gielgud. He conveyed enthusiasm in an offhand way, and he tossed around large ideas without losing his casual touch. The patrician tone of his spiel might have struck some listeners as a bit mannered, but he took such obvious pleasure in the performance, and had such a firm grasp of all the particulars of his subject, that it would have been almost unthinkable to deny him a willing suspension of disbelief.



"Circa 1492," the National Gallery's major contribution to the nationwide celebrations surrounding the five-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America, was scheduled to open in October, 1991, Brown said. The show had been conceived as "an opera in three acts." Act I would focus on the Mediterranean basin at the time of Columbus's voyages—a period that coincided, conveniently, with the glories of the Renaissance in Italy. He spoke succinctly, his large hands shaping the air in front of him, about the Renaissance concept of man as the center of the universe. He mentioned the Nuremberg Globe, dated 1492, which showed only water on our side of the world, and he said that he hoped it would be coming to the National Gallery for the show. He talked about Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer and the rationalization of pictorial space, and about the drive for knowledge which had fuelled the great voyages of exploration, and about the lure of the Far East, and somehow he gave the impression that these concepts were going to be made visible through the works of art that would come to Washington—and nowhere else, because the show was not going to travel. Act II would be "what Columbus might have seen if he'd made it to the Far East": a carefully selected display of art objects and artifacts from the great civilizations of China, Japan, and India in and around the year 1492. Act III, the finale, would show the splendor of the native civilizations that flourished in the Americas at the time of the Spanish conquest. "If there's a moment in history on which you can pin the dawning of that consciousness of where we are now, as a nation among nations on spaceship earth, it really is 1492," Brown said. "My dream is to have someone walk out of the show, see the photograph that was taken from outer space, the famous photograph that's called, I think, 'Earthrise,' and recognize that, well, 1492—that's where it started."

Brown went on to discuss the financial aspects and requirements of this ambitious exhibition (the most complex and probably the costliest ever undertaken by the National Gallery), mentioning that Congress had been asked for a special supplement to the Gallery's regular appropriation and that the Secretary of State, James A. Baker, "who loves art," was being very supportive. What the National Gallery had in mind, Brown said, was to put together a consortium of four major corporations to contribute the rest of the funds required, with Merrill Lynch acting as the "flagship," whose participation would help to bring in the other three. Brown then introduced a young scholar named Jay Levenson, the curator of the exhibition, who showed slides and talked in more detail about each of the three acts. The entire presentation took no more than an hour, and when the Merrill Lynch executives had finished asking their questions one of them came over to shake Brown's hand. "We've all been wondering what you could do to top the 'Treasure Houses of Britain' show, and this might just be it," he said. "Congratulations."

A few minutes later, Brown, back in his office, was cordial but reserved. "These corporations are so big, and there are so many decision-makers," he said. "You never can read it. I keep thinking of the message I saw once on a pillow at Doris Duke's house in Newport: 'The answer is maybe—and that's final.' " He riffled through a dozen telephone messages that had come while he was in the meeting. Light poured in through floor-to-ceiling windows, one of which neatly framed the Capitol. Brown's office is on the seventh floor of the new East Building, which opened in 1978. It is large, and decisively uncluttered. Three paintings are on view: a very beautiful blue-and-purple Rothko; a Paul Klee townscape, somewhat untypical; and a large gilt-framed oil painting of St. Peter, downgraded some years ago from Rubens to School of Rubens, which Brown occasionally uses (as his predecessor, John Walker, also did) to test the connoisseurship of curatorial aspirants. Behind an oval desk, on the floor beneath bookshelves, were seven attaché cases in varying degrees of dilapidation, testaments to the rigors of more or less continual travels. A framed crayon drawing of Christopher Columbus by Elissa Lucinda Rionda Brown, the director's seven-year-old daughter, stood on one of the shelves.

"Actually, the '1492' show is a big question mark at the moment," Brown said reflectively, leaning back in his chair and stretching his legs. His voice had dropped into its lowest, barely audible register, and, I noticed, he had his eyes shut—a disconcerting habit that he reverted to periodically throughout our conversations. He went on talking about the increasing difficulty of financing big international loan shows, what with the soaring costs of insuring works of art. I asked him whether the burdens of administration and fund-raising interfered more and more with the aesthetic pleasures of his job, and he shook his head slowly. "On the contrary," he said, blue eyes open now. "It's the aesthetic pleasures that keep me here. I have no contract, no tenure. The trustees can call a meeting in three days, so my life expectancy here is extremely tenuous. But what's so great is that I can be hands on, with '1492' and other shows; I can follow them right through. In a way, it's a dream job."

Art museums have been described as the cathedrals of our secular age, but it may be more pertinent to view them as the theatres of a predominantly visual culture. The National Gallery puts on twenty or more special exhibitions a year, several of which fall into the category known, inelegantly, as blockbusters (a show-biz term if ever there was one). Next year happens to be the Gallery's own fiftieth anniversary, and, in addition to the opening of "Circa 1492," major exhibitions of works by Titian, Van Dyck, and Malevich have been scheduled; the Malevich will also be seen in Los Angeles and New York (at the Metropolitan Museum), but the Titian, mounted in collaboration with the City of Venice, where it opened last summer, is a National Gallery exclusive, and so is the Van Dyck. The Metropolitan, which is sixty-seven years older than the National Gallery, is generally credited with (or blamed for) initiating the blockbuster phenomenon, but in recent years the National Gallery has frequently won out over the Met in the competition for these big international loan shows. The rivalry between the two institutions has been intense and, at times, acrimonious. Carter Brown plays the competitive museum game with aggressive aplomb, emphasizing the "national" aspect of his museum to exert leverage on foreign museum directors whose institutions, like his, are supported largely by government funds. The Chief Justice of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of the Treasury sit on his nine-person board of trustees, and Brown's wide network of connections in politics as well as in the international museum world gives him many built-in advantages.

Relations between the Met and the National Gallery have improved in the last few years, especially at the curatorial level, but the National Gallery's insistence that any major international

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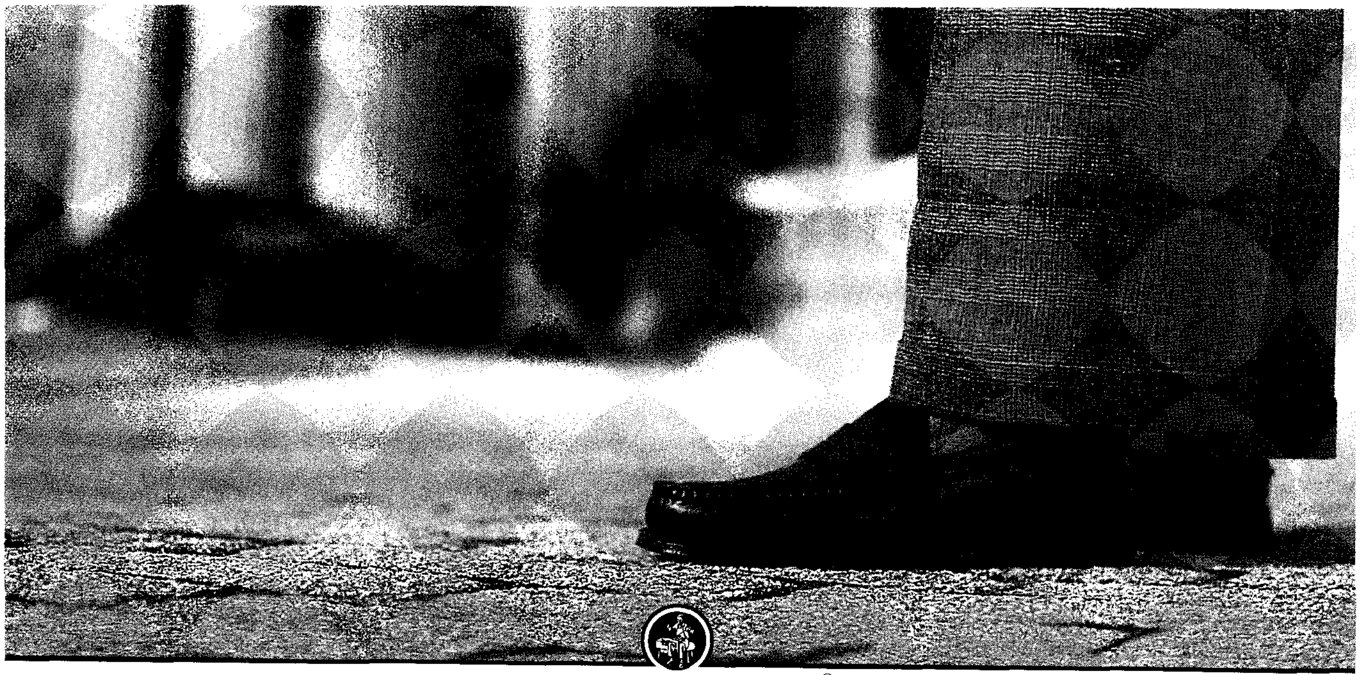

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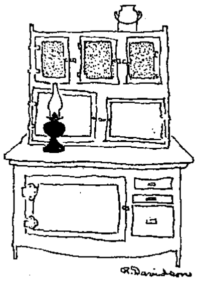
loan show it takes must appear there before going to any other museum still rankles in some quarters. (Brown says that it is a trustee policy he inherited, and that it has been reviewed on repeated occasions.) Some Met officials complain that Brown tends to take credit for shows that originated elsewhere, without sufficiently acknowledging the scholarly contributions of curators here and abroad. Brown has no trouble rising above such complaints. He is formidably articulate in the Gallery's defense, and is a master at dealing with the press on his own terms, which are never less than arm's length. Sometimes you get the feeling that what his detractors really can't stand is his long-term success—he has been the director for twenty years now—and the ease with which he appears to sustain it.

The National Gallery's most recent annual budget was fifty million dollars, and, as usual, the federal government paid more than eighty per cent of it, through congressional appropriation. Although Brown has instituted major fund-raising for acquisitions and for exhibitions, he has never had to worry about deficits, the way other museum directors do. Moreover, since the East Building opened, the annual admission figures have soared, reaching a level of between five and seven million visitors —not one of whom gives a nickel to enter. In this respect, at least, the National Gallery has lived up to its title, by becoming the country's leading art museum. The Metropolitan is far bigger, of course, and far more comprehensive, with nineteen curatorial departments, covering nearly every aspect of art, Eastern as well as Western, from circa 5000 B.C. to the present. To most American museum-goers, though, art means painting and sculpture, and in this area the National Gallery, which limits itself to painting, sculpture, and graphic arts of the Western world from the late Middle Ages to the present, is the equal of any museum on the continent. In recent years, the Gallery has also been able to attract top-flight curatorial talent, to support research by international art scholars, and to publish an impressive list of catalogues and monographs in many fields. The dominant presence there, however, is still J. Carter Brown's. "He wears the place like a suit of clothes," says Roger Mandle, the Gallery's deputy director, who left his job as the director of the Toledo Museum of Art in order to come and work under Brown. "Carter has snowed everybody," concedes S. Dillon Ripley, the former Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, whose feelings about his erstwhile colleague are mixed. It is, in any case, almost impossible at this point to imagine the National Gallery without Carter Brown, or vice versa. The job is clearly his life, and, at the age of fifty-five, he could say that his life before he came there had been a preparation for the job.

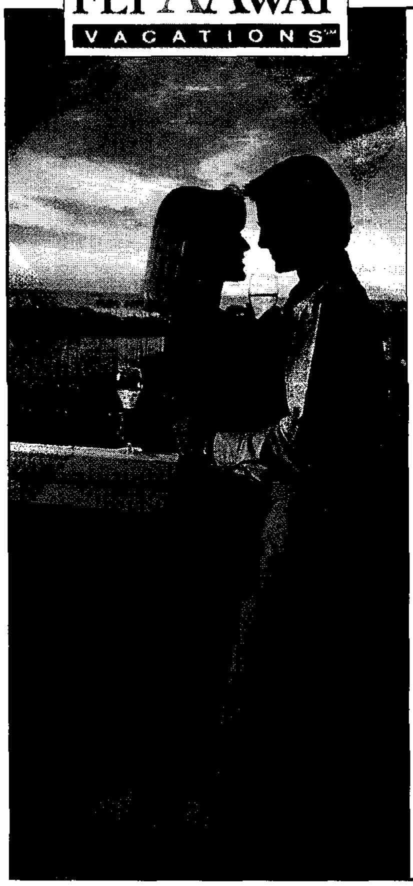


As an unusually well-adapted survivor of the old Wasp aristocracy that used to run things in this country, Brown is certainly in the right profession. American art museums still like their directors to have a certain social aura, an ability to personify ancien-régime values that mask the cutthroat struggle for funds, loans, and acquisitions. The old family that Brown comes from has survived better than most. Chad Brown, the first of the clan to leave England for the Colonies, arrived in Boston in 1638, and almost immediately moved south to Providence, Rhode Island. Chad's descendants were inordinately successful in shipping, manufacturing, banking, land speculation, railroads, and a host of other gainful pursuits. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the family's wealth and influence increased with each generation, and then, in 1900, by one of those quirks of fate which popular novelists used to depend on, typhoid fever took the lives of the two principal male heirs within three weeks, and the entire Brown family fortune, which was estimated, in that pre-inheritance-tax era, at ten million dollars, descended upon a very small infant named John Nicholas Brown, whom the press promptly anointed the world's richest baby.

The sturdiness of character that had sustained earlier generations of Rhode Island Browns did not run out for John Nicholas, who grew from a very small infant into a very large man, six feet six inches tall, with extra-long arms, huge hands, and craggy features that reminded people of Boris Karloff's. Seemingly immune to the infections of great wealth and celebrity, John Nicholas Brown decided at the age of ten that he would not go to Brown University—the former College of Rhode Island, which had been renamed, in 1804, because of multiple Brown-family benefactions. Overhearing the university's president tell his mother, during tea at her house, that her only son could count on special treatment when, in due course, he enrolled at Brown, the scion determined on the spot to break with family tradition and go to Harvard. He did not regret the choice. Influenced by the teachings of the legendary Paul Sachs, he took a master's degree in art history, developed a lifelong fascination with the classics and with Byzantine and medieval studies, and became a collector and a connoisseur of drawings, from the Old Masters to Cézanne and Matisse. J.N.B. was a muscular intellectual, fluent in Latin and Greek, tireless in the pursuit of knowledge and in the dispensing of his ample fortune. (He inherited an additional twenty million dollars on graduating from Harvard.) He helped to found the Byzantine Institute, whose main function was to uncover the long-hidden mosaics in the Hagia Sophia and other churches in Istanbul. He gave a million dollars to St. George's School in Newport, Rhode Island, his alma mater, to build a Gothic chapel. And at the age of thirty, after a decade as the nation's most eligible bachelor, he married a spirited woman nearly as tall as he was and, in her own world, just as well connected. She was Anne Kinsolving, the daughter of the rector of Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Baltimore; before the marriage, she had been a reporter and a music critic for the Baltimore *News* and also a violinist with the Baltimore Symphony. It was a splendid match, a marriage between equals in nearly every respect, and it produced three predictably splendid children—two boys and a girl. The second born was J. (for John) Carter Brown.

"I grew up in this extraordinary household, where we had chamber music, and books, and Old Master paintings, and trips, and these fabulous parents who encouraged every possible interest that was germane to the profession I'm in," he told me. The house, in Providence, was built in 1791 by a shipping magnate named Joseph Nightingale; it had been bought in 1814 by Nicholas Brown II and occupied by Browns ever since. Nobly proportioned, Georgian, furnished with English and American antiques that had been modern pieces when they were acquired, the mansion—said to be the largest and finest surviving frame house of eighteenth-century America—was enriched by John Nicholas Brown's collection of drawings and by a vast library. Carter and his brother, Nicholas, who is two years older, and his sister, Angela, who is three years younger, never doubted for a moment that their parents expected them to live up to these august surroundings. As a middle child, Carter felt that he was "slightly ignored" by his parents, but, he maintains, "this was the perfect way to grow up, because I was left more to my own devices." It may well have been a boon not to grow up in the direct focus of those parental expectations. A childhood friend of the Brown children remembers that when they came to visit her family in Manhattan during Christmas or spring vacations they would arrive with tickets to all the important plays, operas, concerts, and other cultural events, and these would take up most of their available hours. If one of the children happened to get sick and run a fever, he or she was nevertheless honor-bound to use the ticket, on the theory that you got over a fever but you might never again have the chance to see or hear the performance.

Anne Kinsolving Brown saw to it that her husband and each of their children learned to play a musical instrument. Carter took lessons on the piano and the clarinet, and dutifully joined in family concerts. He remembers sitting in his pajamas on the staircase and secretly conducting the professional chamber-music ensembles that came to the house from time to time to play for guests. Although both parents were impressive, Anne Brown was somewhat more formidable. John Nicholas Brown served on countless boards of trustees, gave generously to many causes, and was respected throughout the state of Rhode Island, but he was also a booming, jovial man who told jokes on himself and enjoyed all kinds of people. His wife tended to intimidate them. Growing up, she and a brother collected tin soldiers; with her rigorous intelligence, she began to question whether the tin soldiers' uniforms were authentic. She bought a book on military uniforms, and then more books, and prints, and eventually



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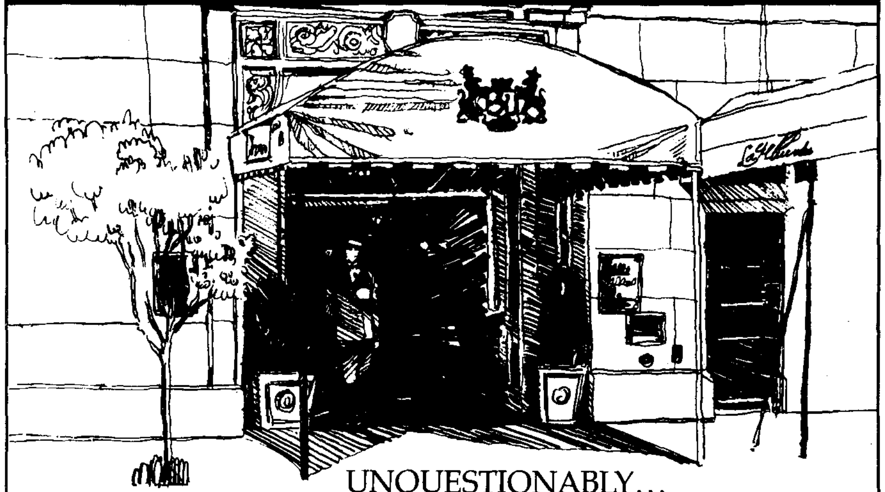

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"Oh, just sitting around doing five to ten for armed robbery. And you?"

• •

rare treatises, until, in time, she became an authority in that somewhat arcane field, with a wide correspondence and any number of scholarly papers of her own. She did not go in for half measures, and neither did her children. Carter, the most academically gifted of the three, never got any special praise for doing well in school, because he was expected to do well. Angela remembers Carter teaching himself to touch-type when he was ten, and bringing stacks of books along to read when they went cruising in the family boat during summer vacations. They spent summers on Fishers Island, in a modern house designed for them by Richard Neutra. When the war came, and the Navy became a dominant presence on Fishers, the Browns reverted to Newport, where J.N.B.'s mother had built a grand Normandy-style château, called Harbour Court, with grounds landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted.

Carter went away to boarding school when he was nine—young by American standards. Two years before, in 1941, the family's Swedish chauffeur had come down with tuberculosis; the whole family had been X-rayed as a precaution, and a doctor had discovered a suspicious spot on one of young Nicholas's lungs. ("No doctor ever found it again," according to Nicholas.) Both boys thought later that this might have been, at least in part, a ruse to get them away from the East Coast in wartime. At any rate, Nicholas was sent to the Arizona Desert School in the fall of 1942, and Carter followed him a year later. They both loved the school, which offered riding and polo, camping trips, and other outdoor activities. There were only about forty-five students, and not many rules; if you broke the rule about not having candy in your room, a column of ants would march in from the desert and give you away. Because the school was so far from the students' homes, there were no Christmas or spring vacations. (This was in the days before jet travel.) Instead, the Brown boys' parents came out by train in January to take them off on trips—one year to Sun Valley, the next to Beverly Hills. All three of the Brown children speak today, in almost the same words, of the extraordinary harmony that existed within their family. "It's really amazing how well we did and still do get along," Nicholas told me. "When Carter came out to the Arizona Desert School, where I'd been for a year, I was proud to have him there. It was always clear that Carter was a better student than I was, and I took pride in that. I was probably a little better in sports, although neither one of us was really an athlete. In temperament Carter was closer to our father than I was, more reflective and intellectual." Nicholas—who quit Harvard to enter the Naval Academy, became a career naval officer, and is now the director of the National Aquarium in Baltimore—was usually thought to take after his mother. "Carter's a much more private person than I am," he told me. "I wear my heart on my sleeve, but even I don't really know what Carter's thinking."

Leaving home at the age of nine can contribute to a certain emotional hardening, but Carter never felt the need for adolescent rebellion, and neither did his brother or his sister. Nicholas used to have epic arguments with their mother, but none of the children remember any real problems with their father. From the time the boys went away to boarding school—Arizona was followed by Groton—both of them saw their parents mainly during the summer, when life centered on sailing. They were all passionate sailors. Carter got a Herreshoff Bullseye of his own when he was twelve, and later he and Nicholas raced together in a thirty-foot Shields-class boat. "Carter was very good on the starting line," his brother says. "Very tough, very competitive." The Brown children won a lot of racing trophies, and their love for the sport has never abated. "Sailing satisfies all my interests," Carter told me. "Reading the wind shifts, understanding the environment, figuring out your opponent's thinking and how to deal with it—it's like three-dimensional chess played out in the real world." Sailboat racing is, of course, the quintessential Wasp sport. To do it well requires intellectual quickness and rigor, a fine sense of profit and loss, and a liking for physical discomfort. Cleanliness, order, and tradition reign aboard a racing boat, and moral ambiguities are rare.

A chronic knee problem ruled out most sports for Carter while he was at Groton and Harvard. He was able to compete in the men's national sailing championships one year while wearing a leg brace, but tennis, skiing, and contact sports were forbidden. At Groton, he managed the football team, and got permission to practice the piano during athletic periods at other times of the year. He graduated first in his class, at the age of sixteen, and his parents, having decided that he was too young for college, then sent him abroad for a year, to the Stowe School, in England. The family seat of the Dukes of Buckingham, Stowe had been built in the seventeenth century, and was one of the great English country houses. It had been sold at auction in 1922 and turned into a model British public school. Carter's year there was "a fabulous experience," although one suspects that what he gained from it was not primarily academic.

Harvard offered him advanced placement when he entered, in the fall of 1952, but he declined the compliment. "It was so great finally to be nearer the age of my classmates—at Groton, I'd been two years younger," he said. "And at Harvard it was O.K. to be interested in the arts." Carter was decidedly interested in the arts. Music had been a factor in his life since early childhood, and so had pictures; a Matisse drawing and a Cézanne watercolor from his father's collection hung in his bedroom at Harvard. He joined the Harvard Dramatic Club, and was one of the founders of the Eliot Drama Group. For a time, he thought seriously about a career in the theatre, but when he was offered the chance to direct "Richard II" for the drama group he had to turn it down, because he had just been elected president of the Harvard Glee Club. "The Glee Club turned out to be an enormous drain on my time," he recalled. "We did fifty concerts a year, and tours, and all kinds of stuff, but I loved that. It's an enormous factor in your emotional life to have that kind of release; to crawl inside a piece of music and help make it happen has got to be one of the greatest fulfillments in life." For a young man who did not wear his heart on his sleeve, that sort of emotional release must have been a great temptation, but Carter Brown realized at some point during his undergraduate years that he did not have enough talent to be a musician, or an artist of any kind. The next-best thing, he decided, would be to work in some area of cultural management.

Several years before, on vacation from Groton, he had gone down to Washington, where his parents lived during the war: Harry Truman had made John Nicholas Brown his Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air, for a three-year period that J.N.B. later called the happiest time of his life. Carter, riding in a cab with his parents from Union Station to their house in Georgetown, had seen from the window the recently completed National Gallery of Art, its massive neoclassical exterior wet with rain, which brought out the pinkness of the Tennessee marble, and he had said—or so the story goes—that he would like to run that place someday. What he actually said, he thinks, is that he would "like to work in a place like that." Being a museum director was definitely an idea that appealed to him. While he was still an undergraduate at Harvard, he went to see Francis Henry Taylor, the former director of the Metropolitan Museum, who was then running the Worcester Art Museum, in Worcester, Massachusetts. Taylor advised him not to major in art history if he was thinking about museum administration ("He said, 'You'll be spending your *life* in the arts!' "), and not to bother getting a Ph.D. right away; he recommended going to business school first. Carter took his advice. He majored in history and literature, graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, and signed up for Harvard Business School in the fall.

That summer, the Harvard Glee Club made its first European tour since 1921, performing in London's Royal Albert Hall, in Chartres Cathedral, and in St. Peter's in Rome. It also sang Renaissance motets in the church of Santa Trínita in Florence. Nicky Mariano, the longtime secretary-companion to Bernard Berenson, was in the audience, and afterward she came up and said, "B.B. has got to hear this. It's everything he loves—it's Renaissance, it's music, and it's Harvard." A small group was selected to give a private concert at the villa I Tatti for Berenson, who was too infirm to travel. "We went up and sang for him in the library," Brown recalls. "The acoustics in there were wonderful, and he was obviously moved. Afterward, we were served lemonade, and, one by one, we were brought up to meet him. Of our group, I was the one who was most interested in his field. He asked what I was up to, and I said that after the tour I was going to meet my father in Istanbul, where the Byzantine Institute was uncovering the mosaics in Kariye Djami. I remember having the gall to quote Thomas Whittemore, the Byzantinist who had got my father interested in archeology, to the effect that the Italian primitives had wanted to put out hellfire with holy water. Well, B.B. liked an argument, and we really swung at each other, and I thought, God, I've blown it. But when the dust settled he said, 'Would you like to come and study with me?' I said something like 'Well, maybe, in due course, but I have these other plans'—in spite of the fact that he was eighty-seven."

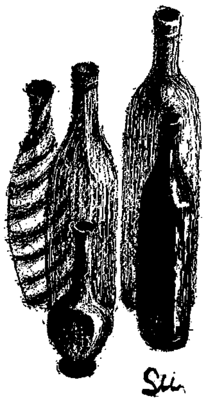
Brown completed his two years at Harvard Business School in 1958, and that fall, finding Berenson still alive and the offer still open, he seized it. In a published reminiscence he recalls his first lunch at I Tatti, with Berenson wrapped in shawls and wearing a skullcap, and himself feeling "like some Nardo di Cione brought in for authentification," but very soon the conversation flowed, and they discovered that they had both written poetry at Harvard, using very similar imagery, some seventy years apart. "Intellectually he seemed totally unimpaired by age," Brown writes, "although he complained of his memory 'falling away in chunks.' " Brown was the last in a long succession of Berenson students, a list that included Kenneth Clark, John Pope-Hennessy, and other famous art historians. Berenson gave him daily assignments. " 'Today you will go down and look at the Brancacci Chapel, and tell me what you think about Masaccio,' he would say." Brown stayed at the villa and put on a dinner jacket every evening. Then, before Christmas, feeling the need for a more structured academic environment, he decided to go to Paris to attend the École du Louvre course for museum professionals. "Berenson was hopping mad when I left," he says, "but I'd realized there was a limit to what I could accomplish there."

While at the Louvre, and during the summer of 1959, Brown used Europe as his lab. Fluent in several languages—he had learned French from a childhood mademoiselle, and German at Groton—he roamed the Continent absorbing at first hand the art history that he had shunned at Harvard. He studied Assyrian relief sculpture at the British Museum and Dutch painting at the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, in the Hague. "Instead of looking at slides all day, I was getting a real education, but it was self-taught."

By the fall, Brown felt ready to enter New York University's Institute of

Fine Arts, the principal training ground for American museum curators. He passed his comprehensive exams in art history on his first day there, and that left him free to audit the courses he chose and to work toward his advanced degrees. He had decided to get a doctorate after all, "more or less on the theory of Fiske Kimball, the director of the Philadelphia Museum, who used to say that it was easier to get a Ph.D. than to explain why you hadn't." He wrote his master's thesis on Jan van Goyen (1596-1656), a relatively obscure artist who had helped to establish the first school of Dutch naturalistic landscape painting. "I'd always loved Dutch seventeenth-century art, and so I decided to do my thesis on van Goyen," he told me. "I never regretted it until I saw a retrospective of his work, and realized that sometimes when we get all the work of an artist together it doesn't do that artist any particular service. There are greater artists than van Goyen."

Midway through his second year at the institute, Brown had a visit from John Walker, the director of the National Gallery in Washington. Walker and his wife, who spent their summers on Fishers Island, had known the Brown family since Carter was twelve. One summer, in fact, Carter had made a formal appointment to go and talk with Walker about museum work, but he hadn't shown up for it. A few days later, his mother explained why. Carter's father didn't want him to work in a museum, she told Walker; he knew several museum directors, and none of them were happy in their work. Walker's impression at the time was that John Nicholas Brown felt it would be appropriate for his son to be the president of a museum's board of trustees but not to work *in* a museum. Father and son had eventually come to terms on the issue, however, and Carter was obviously headed for a museum career. When Walker visited the institute in 1961, he was interviewing students for a job in the education department of the National Gallery, but he offered Brown a job in his own office, as an assistant to the director. Brown wasn't sure he wanted it; he had his eye just then on a curatorial opening at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Walker stepped up the pressure. "He got me down to Washington, and asked what I really wanted to do in life," Brown recalled. "I said something like 'Well, I'd like to be the director of a museum that's the cultural center of its community,' and he said, 'How would you like to do that for the nation?' " It was a difficult question to say no to—and one that Brown himself has since posed to others. He started work at the National Gallery in February, 1961. Walker gave him the summer off to finish his master's thesis, but he never did get his doctorate. "I left N.Y.U. and that thesis, which only I and about two other scholars in the world were interested in," he said, "and came down here, and found myself walking along a corridor and hearing typewriters clacking away on something that I was involved with, and that would help change people's lives, and I felt a rush of pleasure and excitement that has never left me."



WHEN Andrew Mellon moved to Washington, in 1921, to begin his public career as Secretary of the Treasury, under President Warren Harding, he brought with him a substantial number of paintings from a collection he had been building up in Pittsburgh since the eighteen-eighties. Word soon leaked out in the diplomatic colony that if you wanted to see real works of art you should get yourself an invitation to Mellon's apartment, at 1785 Massachusetts Avenue. The capital had very few public or private art galleries in those days. The Corcoran, chartered in 1869, showed American art; Duncan Phillips was on the point of opening his fine collection of modern art to the public, as the Phillips Memorial Art Gallery; and there was within the Smithsonian Institution something called the National Gallery of Art, in which you could see minor European paintings and decorative arts and some American pictures. But as a museum town Washington was at least fifty years behind Boston and New York, both of which had chartered major historical art museums in 1870, and it was a long way behind Philadelphia, Chicago, and Cleveland as well. The museums in those cities owed their existence to the civic pride and social ambitions of well-to-do merchants, bankers, lawyers, and industrialists, who had come to feel that cultural enrichment ought to go hand in hand with economic growth. Washington, a different sort of city, more provincial and insular in spite of its tidal wash of temporary inhabitants, did not have a resident class of millionaires until fairly recently, and its cultural pretensions languished as a result. The National Gallery came into existence through the exercise of Andrew W. Mellon's sovereign will, for reasons that were probably more complex than the pure spirit of altruism they are usually attributed to.

Although Mellon was one of the two or three richest men in the country, his name had never appeared in the *Times* until Harding named him Secretary of the Treasury. This was a tribute to the financier's ironclad reticence, for his career had been as spectacular and every bit as ruthless as the careers of John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and Henry Clay Frick, who were his peers and not infrequently his colleagues or competitors. Mellon's ancestors were plantation Irish—English Protestants encouraged by the Crown to settle in Northern Ireland. Thomas Mellon, Andrew's father, had come to America with his parents when he was five, in 1818, and had grown up on a farm in western Pennsylvania. Inspired by Benjamin Franklin's "Autobiography," Thomas Mellon went to college, became a lawyer, served as a judge, made money in real estate, and then established a private banking firm. It helped to finance Carnegie, Frick, and other budding entrepreneurs of the post-Civil War industrial boom. Andrew took over his father's bank in 1882 and showed similar acumen in lending money to the right people. He financed Charles M. Hall, whose patented process for smelting aluminum led directly to the development of the Aluminum Company of America. He was instrumental in organizing Gulf Oil, to exploit the vast new oil fields in Texas and Oklahoma, and he played a key role in establishing the Union Steel Company, which later merged with U.S. Steel. Before long, Mellon was in oil, coal, steel, coke, chemicals, railroad cars, shipbuilding, and public utilities, as well as banking, insurance, and real estate. Sixty corporations eventually listed him on their boards of directors.

And yet he managed to remain virtually incognito, even in Pittsburgh, where until his mid-forties he lived as a bachelor, with his aging parents, in a gloomy mansion that he was slowly filling up with some of the monuments of Western art.

When he finally married, it was a disaster. In 1898, his friend Henry Clay Frick had introduced him to a wealthy British brewer named McMullen, and the theretofore impervious Mellon, at the age of forty-three, had fallen for McMullen's vivacious twenty-year-old daughter, Nora. She rebuffed him at first, but Mellon persisted, and they were married in 1900. Nora was not prepared for Pittsburgh, or for what seemed to her its brutal inhabitants, and she spent as much time as she could in England. A legal separation in 1909 was followed, three years later, by a bitterly contested divorce. There were two children, Ailsa and Paul; each parent had custody of them for half the year. After the divorce, Mellon concentrated his attention still more on business, seldom accepting even an invitation to dinner. His only other interest, apparently, was buying pictures.

It was also Frick who had introduced him to the pleasures of art collecting, on a joint trip to Europe in 1880. Mellon had begun cautiously, buying Barbizon pictures and insipid salon works, such as Troyon's "Cows in a Meadow," but before long he had moved up to English portraits and Dutch landscapes. He bought mainly through Knoedler & Company, whose salesmen thoroughly understood his preference for idealized subjects in decorous settings. He recoiled from nudes or Crucifixions. This second phase of Mellon's collecting lasted until the nineteen-twenties, when the idea of establishing a national gallery of art took hold of him. Mellon, a lifelong Anglophile in spite of his failed marriage, decided to create a museum in Washington modelled on the National Gallery in London, a museum that showed only paintings, and his collecting horizons expanded significantly as a result. His greatest coup came in 1930-31, when he bought twenty-one paintings from The Hermitage, in Leningrad—masterpieces confiscated during the Russian Revolution and sold off to provide hard currency for the Soviet economy. Although the Depression slowed him down a bit, he

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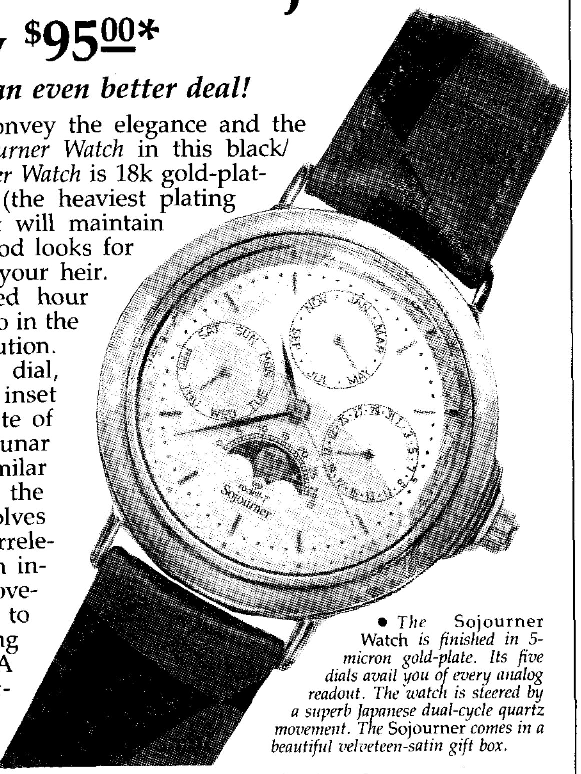

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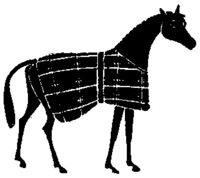
remained Knoedler's most important client for Old Master pictures in every category except nudes. In 1936, he succumbed to the legendary Joseph Duveen. Determined to break Knoedler's monopoly, Duveen had rented an apartment on the floor below Mellon's at 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, filled it with the finest works he had in stock, and given Mellon a key. After several weeks of visits downstairs, and several hours of intricate negotiations, Mellon paid twenty-one million dollars for twenty-four paintings and eighteen sculptures; Duveen had even convinced him that his collection required the addition of Renaissance sculpture to make it complete. At the time, it was the most expensive art sale in history.



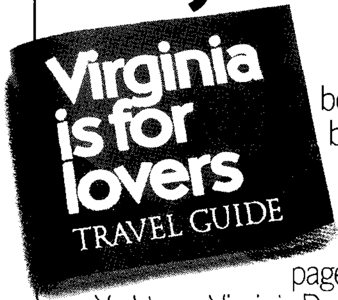
Mellon was out of politics by then. Having failed to foresee the Depression, or to do much about it when it arrived, he had been eased out of the Treasury by Herbert Hoover, and named Ambassador to the Court of St. James's. That appointment had ended, of course, in 1933, when Franklin D. Roosevelt came in. Mellon had been an immensely powerful figure in three previous Administrations. With the White House and Congress firmly in Republican hands, he had reigned as the hero of the triumphant business interests. Mellon had pushed through tax reforms that brought huge benefits to corporations and their stockholders, and he had presided over large reductions in government spending and in the national debt. Toward the end of his life, though, Mellon and his policies had been rudely discredited. Moreover, the Internal Revenue Service—*his* old I.R.S.—now claimed that he owed more than two million dollars in taxes on his 1931 personal income. The Board of Tax Appeals eventually ruled in his favor, but not until a few months after his death. Disappointed and not exactly overburdened with friends, Mellon, a frail-looking old man with an ice-water smile, apparently never considered giving his collection, or any part of it, to his children. According to Paul Mellon, their father never asked either of them whether there were any particular works they would like to keep for themselves. For reasons of his own, and despite the tax case, Mellon wanted everything to go to the nation.

It was a colossal gift, the largest ever made by an individual to a government—a hundred and thirty-two works of art valued at $31,303,162.31, plus fifteen million dollars for a building to house them, plus an endowment of five million dollars, which was later increased to ten million. The official accounts never failed to mention Mellon's stipulation that the museum he was creating should not bear his name, so that it could more easily attract gifts from other benefactors; frequent reference to the nobility of this gesture insured that Mellon's name would attach itself to the enterprise more indelibly than if it had been carved in stone. The endowment income was to be used to pay the salaries of the museum's top officials and to buy works of art, but not for upkeep or maintenance—that would have to come from the government. (Today, the government spends nearly as much each year on the National Gallery as the total of Mellon's original gift.) Mellon indicated the building site he had in mind, on the Mall at Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue. He chose the architect, John Russell Pope, and he outlined the administrative structure to be followed: the National Gallery (or whatever other name might be selected for it) should exist as part of the federally sponsored Smithsonian Institution but should have its own board of trustees—a nine-person board made up of four high government officials, serving ex officio, and five private citizens, who would elect their own successors. This novel combination of federal patronage and private control was a master stroke, whose effects are as evident today as they were fifty years ago. In no other museum do élitism and populism go so smoothly hand in hand.

It was Andrew Mellon, of course, who chose the board of trustees, headed by himself as president. He named as the director of the Gallery his longtime assistant and confidant, David Edward Finley, a courtly, soft-spoken lawyer who once wrote that he had "always preferred art to law, which I had studied at my father's suggestion." Congress voted to accept the gift, and Mellon's terms, on March 24, 1937. Andrew Mellon died five months later, on August 26th, at the age of eighty-two. John Russell Pope died the next day; he had refused to undergo an operation for cancer that his doctors recommended, because he was determined to complete his design for the National Gallery. Most of the important decisions concerning the museum had already been made, however, and the administrative machinery was in place. The old National Gallery of Art at the Smithsonian had been renamed the National Collection of Fine Arts, and no one would ever confuse it with Pope's huge marble neoclassical monolith on the Mall.

David Finley's most immediate problem was how to bring in more works of art. Mellon had specified that future acquisitions, whether by gift or by purchase, be limited to "the highest standard of quality," defined as the standard that "I have tried to adhere to . . . in the collection which I have made." This was quite a challenge. Mellon in his later collecting years had bought sparingly but very, very well. His collection included most of the greatest names in Western European art, from Duccio to Turner, in exceptionally fine examples, with great depth in the Dutch and the English schools. Portraits and landscapes predominated. There were relatively few historical or religious subjects, and still no nudes; the closest approach was Titian's partly undraped "Venus with a Mirror." But in the building that Pope designed, which had three and a half acres of gallery space stretching for two long blocks along Constitution Avenue, Mellon's pictures by themselves would huddle like lost sheep. Finley addressed himself to the scarcity without delay, and from the summer of 1938 on he did so with the help of John Walker, his chief curator and eventual successor.

LIKE J. Carter Brown, and for many of the same reasons, John Walker could say that his early years had been the best possible preparation for his future job. Born in 1906 and brought up in a well-to-do household in Pittsburgh, he was stricken with polio at the age of twelve, and he spent the next two years undergoing treatment in New York. One day, his mother took him, in a wheelchair, to the Metropolitan Museum, and he found his vocation. "All my tedium and loneliness vanished," he later wrote. "I wanted to be a curator." Back home in Pittsburgh, he got to know Andrew Mellon's son, Paul. They were not close friends, but



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SO THAT'S THE BACK OF HIS HEAD!
Leo Cullum

they played poker together on vacations from college—Yale in Paul Mellon's case, Harvard in Walker's. At Harvard, Walker studied with Paul Sachs and took his undergraduate degree in art history. The Harvard Department of Fine Arts then sent him to study with Berenson at I Tatti. Berenson's wife, Mary, was alive then, and Walker lived with the Berensons for three years "almost as though I were their son," he writes in his memoir, "Self-Portrait with Donors." In the absence of any curatorial offers from American museums, he took a job as assistant director and professor of fine arts at the American Academy in Rome. The polio had left him partly crippled, and he got around with the help of a cane, but he was a bluff, self-confident young man, with an absolute disregard for his physical disability. After four years at the Academy, he heard about the new National Gallery that was being planned in Washington, and in 1938 he dashed off a letter to his friend Paul Mellon, asking whether there might be a place for him on the staff. There was a polite, noncommittal reply. A few months later, though, Paul Mellon, who had stepped into his late father's position as president of the board of trustees, called to say that he was in Zurich, and to ask John to come over for a chat. The upshot of their conversation was that Mellon recommended, and the trustees agreed to, Walker's appointment as chief curator.

Before Walker could wind up his affairs at the American Academy that fall, his new employer summoned him home to take part in the delicate negotiations for the Samuel H. Kress Collection. The five-and-ten-cent-store millionaire had amassed a very large collection of Italian paintings, from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries, which he had been planning either to give to the Metropolitan Museum or to install in a museum he would build himself, on upper Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. David Finley had visited Kress's New York apartment in April, 1938, however, and during a seven-hour conversation, which ran through dinner and well into the evening, he had persuaded Kress to give them to the National Gallery instead. Finley's trustees were not sure they should accept the gift. Kress had bought most of his several hundred paintings from a flamboyant, recently ennobled Florentine named Count Contini-Bonacossi, who had been a stamp dealer before he began trading in Old Masters. Contini had persuaded Kress to build a collection along philatelic lines: it included just about every artist of the Italian Renaissance, major and minor. The dealer had enlisted six experts on Italian art to provide attributions and certificates for the works that Kress bought, but it had not escaped the notice of the National Gallery trustees that the most important expert, Bernard Berenson, was not among them. The trustees were uncomfortably aware of Andrew Mellon's stipulation about the standard of quality to be applied to future acquisitions. John Walker, a Berenson disciple who was said to have an excellent eye for Renaissance art, was therefore asked to give his opinion of the Kress pictures.

It was quite evident to Walker that, while some of the pictures were up to the level that Mellon had ordained, most of them were not. Kress had made it clear that the National Gallery must take what he offered, though, and not just the best examples. In the crisis of conscience that ensued, Walker made use of something he had learned in his years with Berenson: that the truth did not always have to be approached head on. It occurred to him that a few, a very few, of Mellon's pictures were not absolutely first-rate. (The original Mellon gift had been refined by Finley from a hundred and thirty-two works to a hundred and twenty-five.) "Couldn't one argue, bearing these Mellon duds in mind, that the Kress works of art were of a similar high standard of quality to *some of* 'those in the collection acquired from the donor'?" Walker mused. "With this rationalization, which still makes me shudder, I signed the affidavit and put myself on record that the Kress gift met Andrew Mellon's stipulations." The National Gallery proceeded to accept three hundred and seventy-five paintings from the Kress collection.

What Walker counted on was the fact that Samuel Kress had not stopped collecting. Until Andrew Mellon died, in 1937, Kress had never bought from the major Old Master dealers, because he was sure that they reserved all their best things for Mellon, but from 1938 on he bought from Duveen, Knoedler, and, eventually, Wildenstein, and the quality of his purchases went up accordingly. The level rose even higher after 1946, when Kress had a crippling stroke, and his brother Rush took over the family business. Rush Kress had a better eye than Sam, he was more willing than his brother had been to part with large sums for important pictures, and his family feeling was such that he thought mainly in terms of building up the Samuel H. Kress Collection in the National Gallery. In this endeavor he was constantly aided by John Walker. Of the three hundred and seventy-five paintings in the original Kress gift, fewer than a third are now on view; the ones that replaced them made it possible for Walker to feel, in time, that his "Jesuitical" judgment had been justified.

JOHN RUSSELL POPE's building, the largest marble-clad structure in the world, was mostly finished by the summer of 1940. Because Pope died before the interior spaces were fully planned, Finley and Walker laid out the galleries—sixty-two of them—themselves, with the advice and assistance of Finley's wife, Margaret. They hung Mellon pictures with Mellon pictures and Kress pictures with Kress pictures wherever possible, even though the Gallery's policy was to install chronologically, and not to keep individual collections together, and they hung each painting twice as far from its neighbors as other museums did—not just to make the pictures cover more wall space but because they subscribed to the pleasure principle in art. The main purpose of a museum, they felt, was neither didactic nor inspirational; the purpose was to give visual pleasure, and pictures with a lot of wall space around them increased that pleasure.

Neither Finley nor his fellow-administrators—the director shared authority equally with a chief administrator and a secretary who also served as chief legal officer—had had any experience in museum work. Nor had Walker or, with one exception, anyone else then on the staff. The collective inexperience led to a chummy, noncompetitive working atmosphere, and that characterized staff relations at the National Gallery for many years. It was very different from the atmosphere at the Metropolitan, for example, where a number of independently powerful curators warred over funds, space, and trustee allegiance. The National Gallery's ambience, although highly agreeable, was somewhat deadening to curatorial initiative. Charles Parkhurst, fresh from the graduate program in art history at Princeton, joined the Gallery staff as a curator in 1941, with high hopes of being in on the founding of a uniquely American museum. His enthusiasm soon waned. "I found the place burdened with more than a hundred years of tradition, because they had taken the National Gallery in London as their model," he said. "There seemed to be no room for adaptation to fit the surroundings in Washington. All the pleasures of dealing with art were in the hands of two people, Finley and Walker. The administration of the place was based on administration, rather than on curatorial scholarship." Parkhurst was given a leave of absence to join the Army in 1943, and he did not return after the war. Neither did Craig Hugh Smyth or Theodore Rousseau, two other young men who started out at the National Gallery in the early nineteen-forties; they went on to have brilliant careers in New York. Curators at the National Gallery were government employees, subject to Civil Service salaries and job classifications. When the museum opened, in March, 1941, there were five curators and two hundred and fifty guards, which seemed to say something about priorities. Paul Mellon used to joke that the guards were there for two reasons—to protect the works

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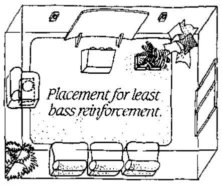
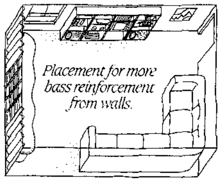
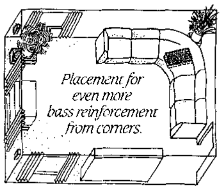
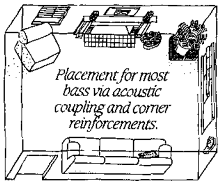

Placement for least bass reinforcement.


Placement for more bass reinforcement from walls.


Placement for even more bass reinforcement from corners.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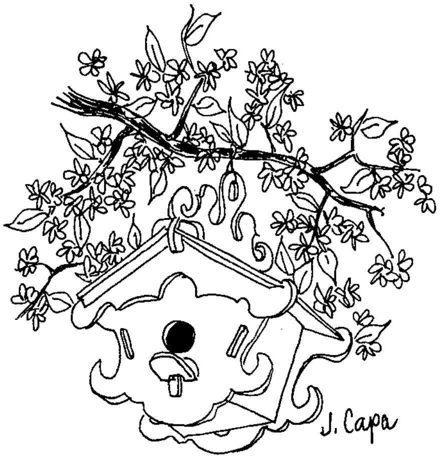
of art and to tell visitors where the next one could be found.

The proportion of art to bare wall was still low in 1941, but reinforcements were on the way. Since 1937, Finley had been paying court to Joseph Widener, with regard to the great collection of his father, Peter A. B. Widener. A onetime Philadelphia butcher, Peter Widener had done so well investing the profits from his Civil War contract to supply mutton to the Union Army that he had become a multimillionaire. He had built a Georgian mansion in the Philadelphia suburb of Elkins Park and filled it with Old Masters that met and in some cases surpassed Mellon's standard (among them "The Feast of the Gods," painted by Giovanni Bellini and later altered by Titian, which is considered to be one of the finest paintings on this continent). When Peter Widener died, in 1915, he left the disposition (but not the ownership) of the collection to his son Joseph, who had helped to build it up. Under Peter's will, Joseph could give the collection to a museum in Philadelphia, New York, or Washington, or he could sell it for the benefit of the family. In 1937, soon after Mellon's death, David Finley made a visit to Lynnewood Hall, the Elkins Park estate. "Mr. Widener wanted his collection to be shown as a unit in contiguous rooms on the main floor," Finley later wrote, "and he wanted to include his Chinese porcelain and certain objects of decorative art as well as furniture." Finley explained to him the trustees' rule against showing individual collections as a unit. He also explained how the rule could be bent: the Widener pictures would have to be distributed according to chronological sequence, but no other works of art would be shown in rooms that were "entirely filled by paintings or sculpture of the same school and period donated by him." Finley also got the trustees to bend the rule that said the National Gallery would show only painting and sculpture. They agreed to let him install the Widener porcelains, decorative-art objects, and furniture in a series of galleries on the ground floor. (The painting and sculpture galleries were on the main floor, one flight up.) Finley had Otto Eggers, Pope's successor as the National Gallery's architect, draw up colored renderings of the rooms to show just how they would look. On his next visit to Lynnewood Hall, Finley saw Widener's eyes fill with tears when he looked at the drawings. "If you will do this for my porcelains," he said, "you can have everything else and I will ask no questions."

There was, however, another problem. Widener did not want his estate to have to pay the tax that Pennsylvania then imposed on charitable gifts—a tax equal to five per cent of the gift's assessed value. Fiske Kimball, of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, who naturally wanted the collection for his own museum, managed to get a law passed exempting Pennsylvania institutions from the tax. Influential friends of the National Gallery then tried to have the new law amended to include federally supported institutions, but Kimball marshalled enough support in the Pennsylvania Legislature to defeat the amendment. The impasse was resolved at a level that indicated the National Gallery's future political clout: President Roosevelt sent a special message to Congress asking that it pay the tax to Pennsylvania, whatever the amount turned out to be, and Congress agreed to do that.

The Mellon, Kress, and Widener pictures established the National Gallery, in record time, as one of the world's great museums. It was hugely popular from the start, attracting a million visitors within the first months —the absence of an admission fee added to the attractiveness—and, just as Andrew Mellon had foreseen, its success became a magnet for new donors. Lessing J. Rosenwald, the retired chairman of Sears, Roebuck, whose collection of sixty-five hundred Old Master prints, drawings, and other works on paper was the finest of its kind in America, made his first gift, of thirty prints, in 1941; two years later, he gave the Gallery his entire collection. David Finley's quiet charm extracted a steady stream of smaller gifts. According to John Walker, part of the secret of Finley's persuasiveness was that he often knew less about works of art than the potential donor did. "He had a great deal of taste but no real knowledge of art," Walker said recently. "His enthusiasm and his belief in the Gallery were like a religion, the great overpowering fact of his life."



Walker was responsible for bringing in Chester Dale, a stockbroker and collector who had learned about the art market by buying a part interest in the Georges Petit Gallery, in Paris. When Walker was an undergraduate at Harvard, he and two other students—Lincoln Kirstein and Edward Warburg—had founded the Harvard Society for Contemporary Art, which put on a number of daring (for that time and place) and prescient exhibitions. Walker had talked Dale into lending some of his modern, School of Paris pictures to some of the exhibitions. A decade later, Walker visited Dale in New York and spoke with feeling about "our need for American and French painting." Dale obligingly sent down seven of his American portraits on indefinite loan, and followed those up, a few months later, with twenty-five French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist pictures, the first to go on view there. The Gallery's acquisition policy, following, as usual, the example of the National Gallery in London, stated that an artist had to have been dead for twenty years before his works could become part of the permanent collection; this rule did not apply to loans, however, and Dale was a virtuoso of the indefinite loan. In the nineteen-thirties, he had lent paintings to the Metropolitan Museum and also to the Museum of Modern Art, which thereupon made him a trustee. In 1943, he lent fifty-two twentieth-century French pictures to the Art Institute of Chicago, which elected him to its board, and forty-two French and American paintings to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which hung them in four special galleries and elected him a trustee, a fellow, and an honorary benefactor. Both the Chicago and the Philadelphia museums were so sure the loans would become permanent that they refrained from purchasing in the areas the pictures covered, and both museums were profoundly distressed when, in 1951 and 1952, Dale took all

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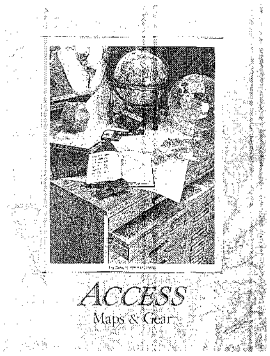

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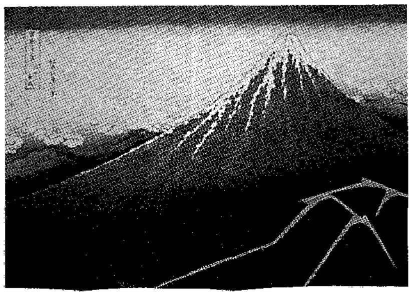

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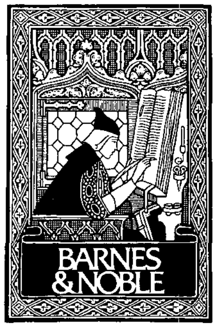

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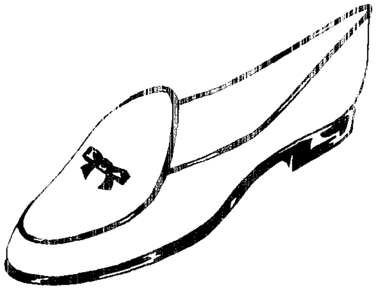

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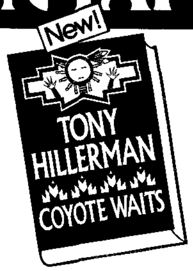

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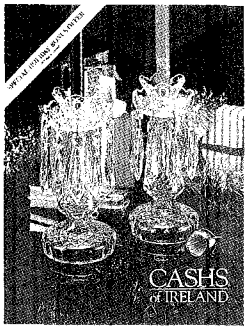

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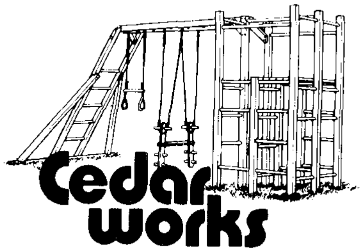

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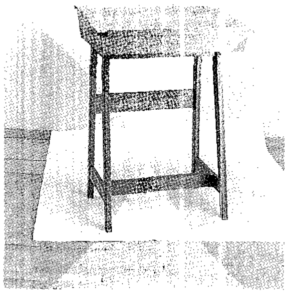

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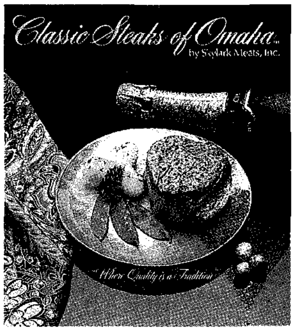

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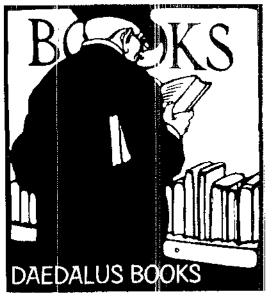
CRUTCHFIELD
Audio/Video, Car Stereo, Telephones
AT LOW DISCOUNT PRICES!

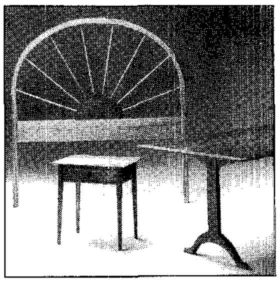
Crutchfield. Get a better deal on stereo and video equipment by using the Crutchfield catalogue. Kenwood, Sony, Pioneer, JVC, Bose, Dual, and many more top brands at discount prices. Over a hundred pages of up-to-date information, exclusive comparison charts, color photos, and consumer tips to help you pick the best components for your car and home. **$1.00.**

36



Daedalus Books. Six different catalogues a year feature literate copy, bibliographic information, and pictures of hundreds of books at fifty to ninety per cent off. Known as the literary remainder company, Daedalus also offers books on the arts, history, gardening, and the sciences. Current authors include Annie Dillard, Edmund White, Jim Harrison, Andre Dubus, and Louise Erdrich. **$1.00.**

37, 38



Dana Robes Wood Craftsmen. Handcrafted furniture and accessory items built in the Shaker tradition of design and quality craftsmanship. Office furniture, dining tables, beds, chests of drawers, hutches, and chairs are constructed from cherry and other hardwoods. Each piece is signed and dated by the craftsman who created it for you. Call (603) 632-5385. Catalogue, **$4.00.**

39

David Morgan offers a unique selection of specialties. Filson outdoor clothing in wool and cotton; English corduroy and moleskin trousers; Akubra hats from Australia; Northwest Coast Indian and Celtic jewelry; Ordnance Survey maps and tour guides of Britain; Welsh ethnic items. Telephone (206) 485-2132 or send for catalogue. **Free.**

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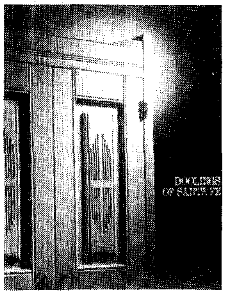

Doolings of Santa Fe. Combining the folk art of northern New Mexico with old-world cabinetmaking techniques, Doolings brings you Southwestern furniture at its finest. Pieces for your residence, executive offices, or the finest hotel suites are available exclusively through our color catalogue or at our workshops and showroom in Santa Fe. Come to the source! **$5.00.**

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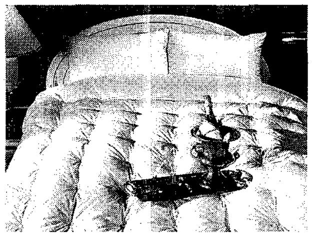

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The Down Company. The Ultimate Comforter is the original white European goose down comforter. It's the only way to cover your bed beautifully, intelligently, and above all, comfortably all year round. For a lifetime of total luxury in bed, order your Ultimate Comforter and Ultimate Pillow now. Comes with the Ultimate money-back guarantee. Phone (800) THE-DOWN. Catalogue, **free.**

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SINCE 1835

Downs Engravers and Stationers. Have the confidence that your messages are carried on elegant, socially correct stationery. Downs' craftsmen will create your own personal engraving on Crane's one hundred per cent cotton-fiber papers of luxurious weight and feel. There is a correct paper for every occasion. Examples of die styles and papers, **$2.00.**

44

Earth Care Paper, Inc.
Recycled Paper Catalog
October 1989–September 1990

Earth Care Paper. Save natural resources! Use recycled paper for your holiday greetings and gifts. We offer an extensive selection of holiday cards, gift wrap, note cards, and stationery — all printed on high-quality recycled paper. Recycled office, printing, computer, and copy papers are also available. Send for our full-color, forty-page catalogue. **$1.00.**

45

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Ecco Bella. The best in ecological products. Biodegradable household products, nontoxic pet products, natural fragrances, cruelty-free cosmetics, aromatherapy skin care, recycled paper products, gourmet foods, gifts, and much more. We make beautiful gift baskets for the holidays! Or, send a gift certificate with our forty-page catalogue. Fast delivery and a one hundred per cent guarantee make it easy to shop with us. Call (800) 888-5320. Catalogue, **$2.00.**

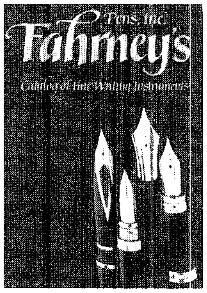
46

A World of Special Experiences

A Unique Gift Catalogue

Experientia, Ltd. Know someone who'd love to soar in a jet fighter, be pampered at an exclusive salon, drift in a hot-air balloon, attend the ballet, or go for a picnic sail? Our unique catalogue is devoted exclusively to gifts that can be experienced rather than possessed. From thrilling adventures to performing arts, give an experience instead. Two-issue subscription begins with our second (1990–91) edition. **$5.00 ($10.00** foreign).

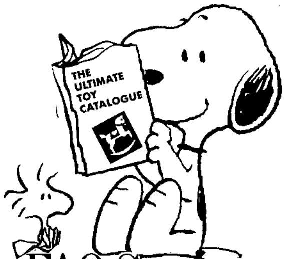
47, 48



Fahrney's Pens, Inc. Welcome to Fahrney's, the pen fancier's mecca for over sixty years. We offer the finest writing instruments from around the world (often at considerable savings). Fountain pens are our specialty. We also carry refills, ink, lead, erasers—everything you'll need for great writing! Visit our store at 1430 G Street, N.W., Washington, DC. **$2.00.**

49

PEANUTS Characters:
© 1958, 1965 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.



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FIFTH AVENUE

FAO Schwarz. When it comes to fabulous toys, we wrote the book! It's the FAO 1990 Ultimate Toy Catalogue — your guide to the world of toys. We'll send you sixty pages of wonderful child's play — for kids of all ages. **$5.00.**

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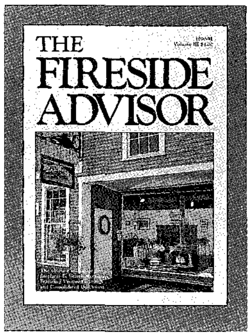

The Fireside Advisor. Efficient, clean-burning stoves and fireplaces from Vermont Castings and Consolidated Dutchwest are described in this ninety-page color catalogue. Today's modern fireplace alternatives feature high heating efficiency, new combustion technology, plus models to suit every decor. Also includes a Stove & Fireplace Buyer's Guide. **$1.00.**

51, 52

By Appointment to
Her Majesty The Queen

By Appointment to
H. R. H. The Prince of Wales

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Established 1730

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The Source for Everything Jewish

Hamakor Judaica is The Source for Everything Jewish. Jewish gifts by mail. A delightful diversity of decorator, collectible, everyday, and whimsical items. Catalogue includes ritual and festival products, limited-edition prints, and sculpture. Be nice to yourself, or find the ideal gift. For the year 5751 and special seasonal mailings. **$2.00.**

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62, 63

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64

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Haverhills. Our catalogue offers a unique selection of timepieces, consumer electronics, home accessories, optics, automotive aids, lamps, tools, and much more. Most of these items are unique — cannot be obtained anyplace else. And many come with Haverhills' "special deal": Buy two and get a third one with our compliments — absolutely free. **$2.00.**

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THE HERB COMPANION
SAFFRON · HERBAL TREES
CHINESE HERBS · NICHOLAS CULPEPER

The Herb Companion. In celebration of the useful plants. This full-color magazine for herb lovers, gardeners, cooks, and craftspeople is full of imaginative ideas for growing and using herbs. Lively recipes for gourmet delicacies, soothing teas and baths, fragrant potpourris, and more. Published six times a year for $21.00. Sample copy, **$4.00.**

66, 67

HORTON'S
NATURALLY SMOKED SEAFOODS FROM MAINE

Horton's Naturally Smoked Seafoods from Maine. Fresh smoked seafood such as Maine mussels, Atlantic salmon, shrimp, scallops, mackerel, trout, seafood pâtés, and more. Recipes and serving suggestions, too. Even one or two fish stories. The Guide to Horton's Fine Smoked Seafood. Send for the only catalogue written for smoked seafood fanatics. If you can't wait for the mail, call (800) 346-6066. **$1.00.**

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Huntington Clothiers & Shirtmakers. Featuring fine traditional dress shirts, tailored clothing, and sportswear for men, our eighty-four-page catalogue offers quality traditional apparel at prices far below retail. As manufacturing merchants, we offer you great direct values with impeccable standards and conservative pricing. Your satisfaction guaranteed. Order toll-free twenty-four hours a day by calling (800) 848-6203. Holiday catalogue, **free.**

69

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Iowa Gourmet Foods. A collection of wholesome and hearty Iowa quality specialties delivered to your door! Discover the finest venison in the world; salt-free spices, herbs, and seasonings; classic pork, perfectly aged beef, choice lamb and veal, and Iowa honeyed hams. Distinctively packaged, easy to order. Call (800) 252-IOWA or (800) 252-4692 for catalogue collection. **$1.00.**

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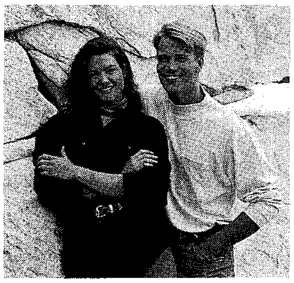
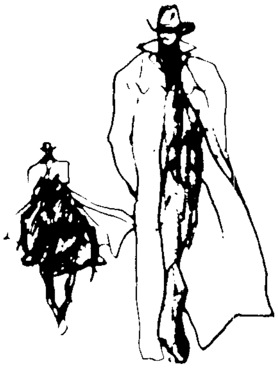
71

JRT JAMES RIVER TRADERS



James River Traders color catalogue features active and career clothing for men and women. All our merchandise is unconditionally guaranteed. Ordering is easy with our twenty-four-hour toll-free number. Color catalogue, **free.**

72



The J. Peterman Company

The J. Peterman Co. catalogue. The unusual, the romantic, the hard-to-find: the Queen Mother's umbrella, Hemingway's cap, Thos. Jefferson's shirt, a horseman's duster, shorts, boots, knickers, hats, skirts. Things that you, of all people, shouldn't be without. **Free.**

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Catalog of
Fine French
Wines

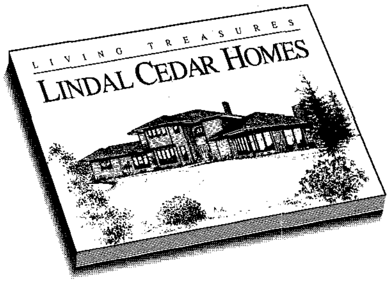
Les Domaines French Wine Newsletter/Catalog offers direct château purchase of French wine with U.S. delivery. Drink a great bottle of wine every night and save thirty per cent on top-rated Bordeaux, rare Burgundies, estate Rhones, plus everyday wines. Catalogues cover wine history, vintage notes, grower profiles, even suggested recipes. One year, **$6.00.**

74

The
Lighter
Side

The Lighter Side. "They who laugh last!" Over five hundred lighthearted surprises that lift the spirit and tickle the funnybone. Your gift of wit, whimsy, merriment, and mirth will be long remembered. Includes dozens of novelty T-shirts and sweatshirts that make perfect gifts. Surprises you never knew existed add glee and gaiety to your holiday shopping and giving. **$2.00.**

75



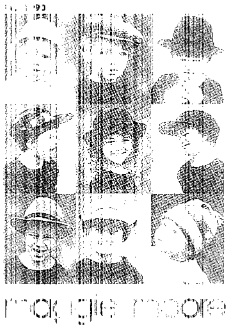
Lindal Cedar Homes. Vaulted ceilings, dramatic entries, expansive decks, and award-winning architecture. Explore it all in the spectacular new 240-page Lindal Planbook. Page after full-color page of exquisite new homes. One hundred and one floor plans, 596 photographs, unique planning grids, and more. **$15.00.**

76

L.L. Bean
Christmas 1990

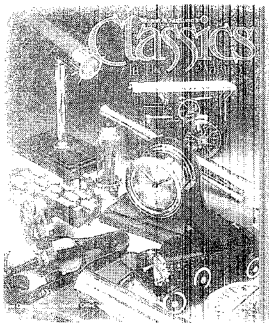
L. L. Bean. Free Christmas catalogue features active and casual apparel for men and women, winter sporting equipment, luggage, furnishings, and accessories for home and camp. For seventy-eight years, L. L. Bean has been providing practical and functional merchandise at reasonable prices. All backed by our one hundred per cent guarantee of complete satisfaction. We offer toll-free telephone services. **Free.**

77



Maggie Moore. Great kids' clothes, accessories, gifts. The Maggie Moore catalogue collection. Cotton comfort, super styles in playwear, outerwear, school clothes, dress-ups for newborn through preteen. Plus quality wooden toys, fantasy costumes, layette sets, more — your complete "kids stuff" kit. Catalogue, **$2.00.**

78



Mason & Sullivan's Classics in the Making. Reproductions of inventions and innovative ideas that are offered in full-size or scaled reproductions in finished or kit form, presented in an exciting, award-winning catalogue. Includes the very finest instrumentation, clocks, weather instruments, live steam, globes, and more. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. **$1.00.**

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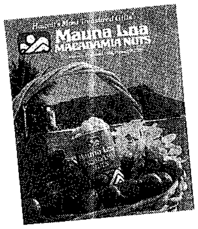
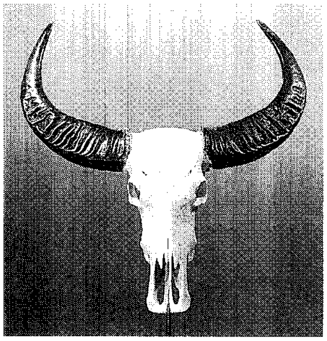
Hawaii's Most Treasured Gifts®

Mauna Loa.
MACADAMIA NUTS



Mauna Loa® Macadamia Nuts. So exotic . . . so rare . . . so wonderfully delicious. A crunchy, buttery, unique taste no one can resist. Over 150 mouthwatering treats to choose from, including salted and unsalted nuts, nuts drenched in rich, creamy chocolate, nuts baked into cookies, cakes, and candy, and much, much more. Catalogue, **free.**

80



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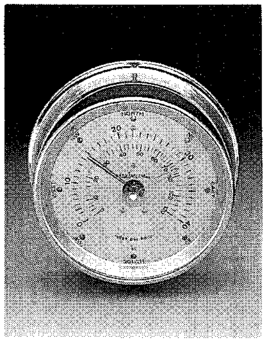

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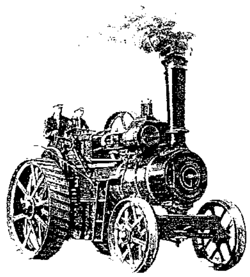
Maxwell Hemmens



Maxwell Hemmens. The world's leading manufacturers of the largest range of high-quality steam working models and bolt-together kits. Our precision models are built individually by British craftsmen in our Yorkshire workshop. A sixteen-page color catalogue is now available, priced **$10.00.**

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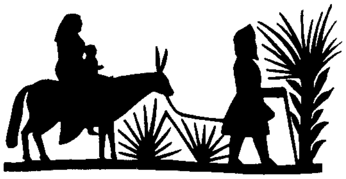
THE
METROPOLITAN
MUSEUM OF ART



The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Explore The Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1990 Christmas Catalogue. Over five hundred unusual and distinguished presents, the majority of which are available only from the Museum. Jewelry, decorative works of art, Christmas cards and ornaments, posters, and art books. Catalogue, **$1.00.**

84

THE MIT
MUSEUM SHOP

The MIT Museum Shop. Fascinating puzzles, jewelry, T-shirts, books, toys, and technological whimsy to captivate great minds of all ages and interests. Discover why we have loyal mail-order customers the world over, from Tahiti to Dubai. Catalogue, **$1.00.**

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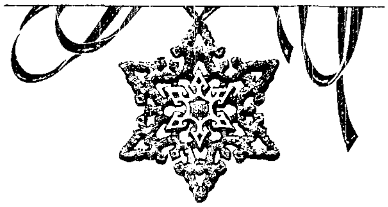

Museum of Fine Arts
Boston

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Discover the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, by mail. Send for the Museum's new Fall 1990 Gift Catalogue and explore ninety-six full-color pages of unique gifts, reproduced from our renowned collections. You'll find jewelry, scarves, sculpture, glassware, posters, books, notecards, children's educational games, and more. Send **$2.00** for a year's subscription to our catalogue.

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88

The New-York
Historical
Society

THE
MUSEUM
STORE

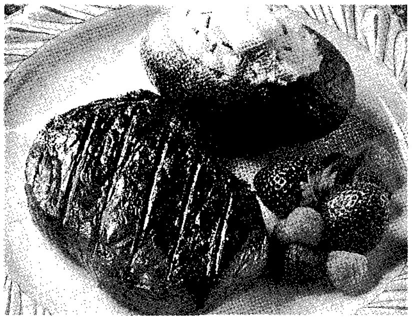
The New-York Historical Society. The Store at New York's oldest museum features in its catalogue an extensive selection of books on New York architecture, the fine and decorative arts, and American history. A spectacular offering of Audubon prints, exhibition posters, and holiday cards are highlighted. **$1.00.**

89

NordicAdvantage℠

NordicAdvantage, from NordicTrack. An all-new collection of fitness products from NordicTrack. Exclusive equipment, activewear, and accessories. Act now, and discover the NordicAdvantage — an improved quality of life that you can only find through fitness! For a catalogue, call (800) 328-5888. **Free.**

90



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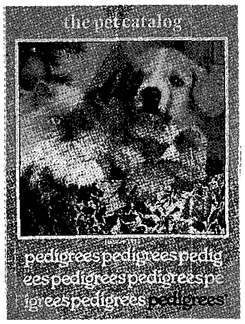
92

Patagonia offers a complete line of innovative clothing for demanding outdoor sports like climbing, skiing, kayaking, fishing, and sailing. Send for a color catalogue with information on our technical gear, layering systems, and sportswear. **Free.**

93


the pet catalog
pedigreespedigreespedigreespedigreespedigreespedigreespedigreespedigrees

Pedigrees . . . The Pet Catalogue. The catalogue for pets with personality. It's fun to read, fun to shop, with hundreds of hard-to-find fashion, food, fantasy, and functional items for the pet with character — personalized neckwear, fashion apparel, beauty and grooming aids, and much more. Send for your forty-page, full-color catalogue. **Free.**

94

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AT THE PHILADELPHIA PRINT SHOP

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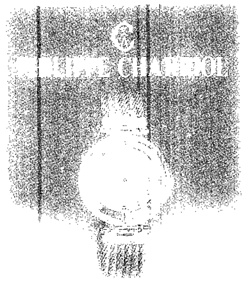
95



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97

Recorded Books
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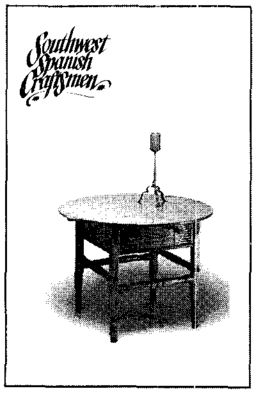

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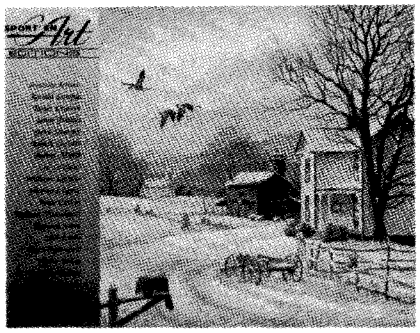

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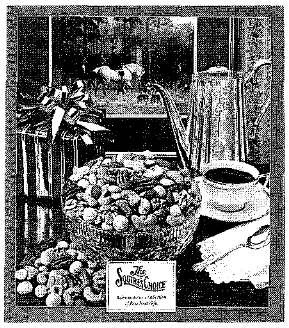

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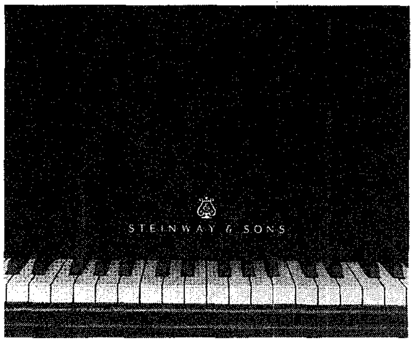

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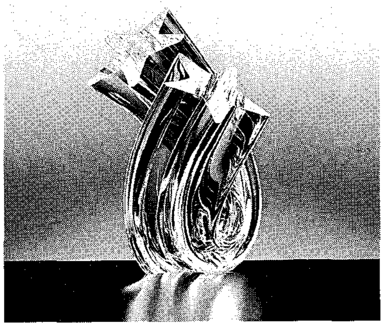

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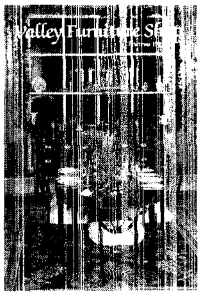

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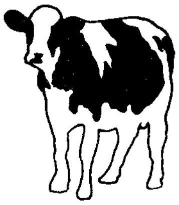

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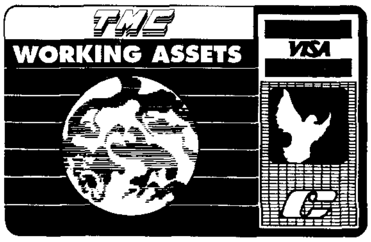

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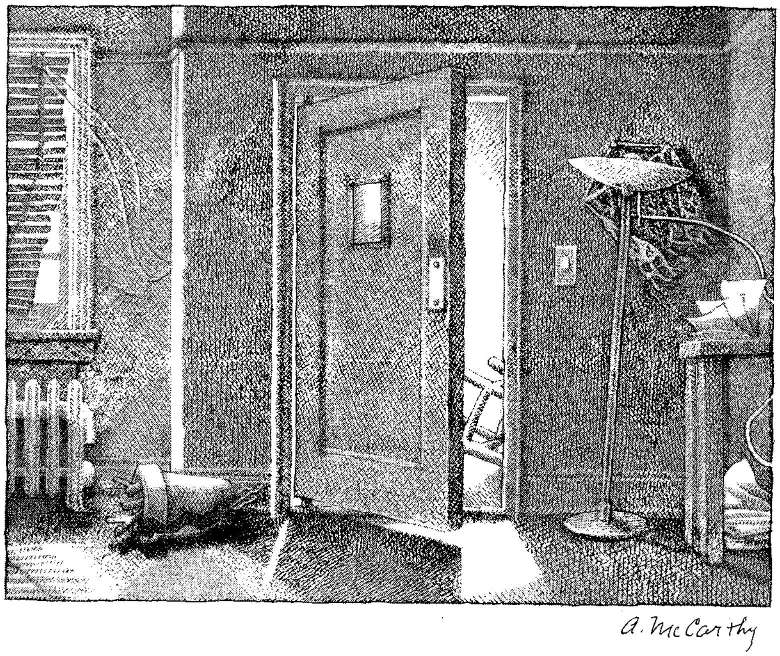
of them back; he lent fifty-four of the paintings to the National Gallery, which subsequently made him president of its board.

Walker could never be certain that the Dale pictures were there to stay. There was a period in the late fifties, after he succeeded David Finley as director, when approximately half the paintings on exhibition were on loan, either from Chester Dale or from the Kress family. Dale and Rush Kress detested one another, and their animosity kept Kress off the Gallery's board. Walker was forever having to mollify either Dale or Kress; he grew very familiar with Dale's complaint that the only person who really understood his collection was Georges Salles, the director of the Louvre. Rush Kress finally converted his family's loans into gifts in 1961. The Dale loans became permanent a year later, when Dale died and his will disclosed a bequest to the Gallery of two hundred and fifty-two paintings and sculptures. Walker wrote in his memoir, "I have slept better ever since."

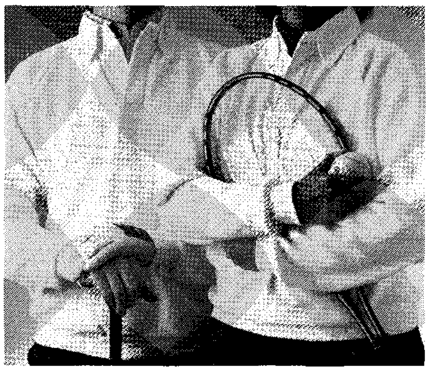
Although Walker came to personify the National Gallery in much the same way that Carter Brown does today, he was sometimes misperceived as a director whose talents were primarily social. The way he swept in and out of the place, turning his limp into a theatrical gesture, the way he talked on the telephone with his friends in exalted positions—this outward show tended to conceal the passionate connoisseur, who rarely left the museum at night without spending at least an hour in the empty galleries after closing time, looking at pictures. Walker had a great eye and a phenomenal visual memory. He called himself an élitist, one who believed that "the success or failure of a museum is not to be measured by attendance but by the beauty of its collections and the harmony of their display," but he also had a democratic reluctance to pad the budget when he went before the Appropriations Committees of Congress each year; the taxpayers, he felt, should not be pressed too hard, and he never asked for or got more than three million dollars a year. Walker agreed enthusiastically to Rush Kress's suggestion of placing more than two hundred and fifty pictures from the Kress collection on more or less permanent loan to eighteen other museums across the country; he disliked the idea of keeping things in storage if they could be enjoyed somewhere else.


Elegant, mature swinging door seeks opposite number. Louvred O.K.

Walker's eye and Walker's knowledge and Walker's diplomacy largely shaped the National Gallery during its first three decades, and it was Walker's decision to have Carter Brown succeed him. Walker himself had nearly been passed over for the directorship when David Finley retired, in 1956. Chester Dale had suddenly and unilaterally decided that Huntington Cairns, the secretary and chief legal officer, would make a better director than Walker, and he had bullied Paul Mellon into going along with him. (Mellon was painfully aware that the Gallery's Impressionist and Post-Impressionist holdings could evaporate if Dale didn't have his way.) Both Cairns and Walker were informed of the decision, but David Finley was incensed by it, and so was Rush Kress, and Kress threatened to remove his loans if it went through. The crisis was resolved by Chief Justice Earl Warren: he told Dale that he would have to convene a meeting of the full board of trustees to vote on it, and Dale thereupon backed down. Walker didn't want any repetition of that embarrassment. He made it very clear that he was grooming Brown to be the next director. There are those who feel that he later regretted doing so, and that this is why there is not a single mention of Carter Brown in "Self-Portrait with Donors." "I worked very closely with Carter for eight years," Walker told me last spring, "and I didn't know him any better at the end than I did at the beginning."

WHEN Carter Brown came to work for John Walker, in the winter of 1961, he was twenty-six years old, dauntingly energetic, but far too self-disciplined to flaunt his natural advantages. For a while, he did all the things that Walker didn't want to be bothered with—answered letters, wrote speeches, drafted press releases. Eventually, Walker put him in charge of education and extension services, an important part of the National Gallery's tax-supported activities but not something of riveting interest to a curatorial mind. Most of the people whom Brown worked with at the Gallery were considerably older than he was, but he doesn't recall encountering any resentment against him on that score. "One nice thing about the National Gallery, especially in those days, was that everybody got along so well," Brown told me. "We didn't have a lot of different departments competing for money, and there were no long knives out. This has always been a fundamentally happy ship."

It became a much happier ship when the Chester Dale era gave way to the second Mellon era. Dale had been president of the board since 1955, and after he died, in 1962, Paul Mellon again took over the job, which he had relinquished in 1939. The director's job became a lot easier as a result. Instead of having to listen to Dale's harangues several times a day on the telephone, or hurry up to New York for six-Martini



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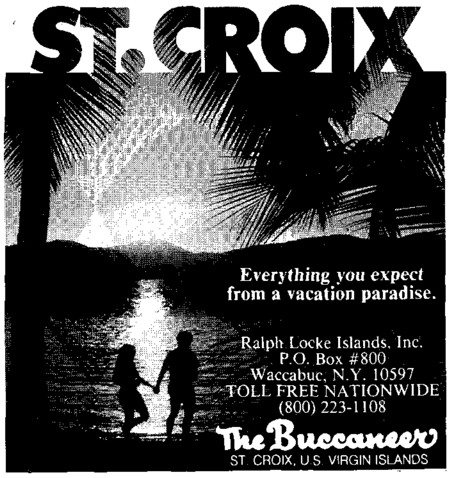

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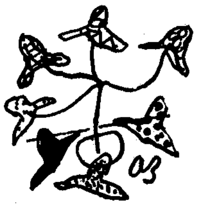
lunches in Dale's apartment, Walker had the novel problem of interpreting Paul Mellon's exquisite reserve. Mellon believed in letting the professional staff run the museum, and it was sometimes hard to get him even to express his point of view. In the late thirties, he had been analyzed by Jung, and he became, in Walker's words, "one of the best-balanced, and, as far as an outsider can ever know, one of the happiest of human beings. One might sum up his character by saying that he likes to see others equally happy but with a minimum of personal involvement." (Walker has also said that "Paul Mellon's friends always loved him more than he loved them.") Mellon has spent a good part of his life giving away the vast fortune that his father left him, most of it to social or cultural causes. An Anglophile whose main pleasures in life have been buying pictures, riding saddle horses, and breeding racehorses, he combined these interests in an unsurpassed collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British art. In 1966, he gave this to Yale, along with a museum building, by the late Louis Kahn, to house it, and ample funds for its maintenance. A second art collection, of French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist pictures, was always earmarked for the National Gallery, and many of the important works in it are already there. His benefactions to the Gallery have been approached in scale and quality only by those of his sister, Ailsa Mellon Bruce, who died in 1969. For years, whenever Walker needed funds for a major acquisition (something the government does *not* provide) he would go to see Paul or Ailsa. Their gifts, which came without strings, have exceeded Andrew Mellon's many times over.



Walker brought Brown along very fast, getting him involved in every aspect of the job, from acquisitions to relations with Congress. (Brown played a key part in the 1967 acquisition of Leonardo da Vinci's "Ginevra de' Benci," the National Gallery's most important purchase and the only painting by Leonardo in this hemisphere; he persuaded the owner, the Prince of Liechtenstein, to send it to Zurich for an X-ray, to put to rest any lingering doubts about the painting's authenticity.) Brown seemed to have no need for a private life away from the job; unmarried and wellborn, he put his social advantages to work for the Gallery, getting on friendly terms with such potential donors as Averell Harriman, John Hay Whitney, and Armand Hammer. In 1967, the trustees detached him from all other duties and put him in charge of planning for the new East Building. When Andrew Mellon made his original gift, he had reserved the plot of land just to the east of the Gallery as a site for expansion. Nobody could say that the Gallery needed more exhibition space—there were still plenty of bare walls in the old building, and even a basketball court for off-duty guards—but Walker was afraid that if they didn't claim the land somebody else would. He had talked to Paul Mellon about the need for a great art library and study center in Washington, and Mellon, whose Bollingen Foundation aided literary scholarship, was so taken with the idea that he instantly agreed to put up half the twenty million dollars that Walker estimated it would cost. Ailsa agreed to put up the other half. For the next ten years, Brown and Mellon devoted a great deal of time and thought to plans for the new building, and both worked closely with I. M. Pei, the architect who was Mellon's choice for the job.

Sixty was retirement age at the National Gallery. The policy went back to the early years, when one of the founding officers had become senile and caused some problems. John Walker was sixty-two in 1969, and Carter Brown was thirty-four. That February, Brown received a letter from Paul Mellon, who was vacationing in Antigua, asking whether he felt ready to take on the directorship. The transition was approved at the next board meeting, in May. Some people on the staff felt that the transition was a bit abrupt, but Walker has always said that he was ready to retire, and there was no question that Brown felt ready to replace him.

Brown made a number of changes right away, some visible and others not. Walker had been content to run the museum under a five-person administrative setup, sharing his authority with an assistant director, a chief curator, a secretary/general counsel, and an administrator, and working things out at informal daily meetings with them in the staff cafeteria. Under Brown, and with Mellon's approval, the director became the chief executive. He did so without antagonizing people or firing anyone, proving in the process that his Harvard Business School degree had not been a waste of time. "I found him very sympathetic and considerate," said Charles Parkhurst, who left his job as director of the Baltimore Museum of Art to become the assistant director and chief curator of the National Gallery (where he had spent an unhappy apprenticeship as a curator in the early forties), largely because he thought so highly of Carter Brown. "He would listen to any advice or suggestion. He knew how to work with people, and he also knew how to keep the reins."

As far as the collection was concerned, Brown saw two areas that needed immediate attention. One was drawings—his father's specialty. Lessing Rosenwald had given the gallery a major print collection but not a major collection of drawings, and Brown set out to remedy that lack. The other area he zeroed in on was twentieth-century art, a somewhat riskier category in the nation's capital than it was in other parts of the country. During the nineteen-fifties, politicians had been very wary of modern art in any form. Representative George Dondero used to revile it regularly, on the floor of the House, as a spearhead of the Communist conspiracy, and more than one government-sponsored exhibition of new American art had been done in by objections in Congress. John Walker had been opposed to buying twentieth-century art, mainly for that reason. "I told the trustees you couldn't win in that area," he recalls. "Either Congress would be against you or the artists would be up in arms." Walker had left the modern-art question to Chester Dale. Dale's Picassos and Matisses had brought the historical sequence up to around 1940, but there was not much after that, and the international acclaim for postwar American art was already making it expensive. Brown engaged William Seitz, a former Museum of Modern Art curator, to come down and advise the staff on postwar art, and in 1974 he hired the Gallery's first twentieth-century curator, E. A. Carmean, Jr. The opening of the modernist-oriented Hirshhorn Museum, a short distance away, across the Mall, made it unnecessary for the National Gallery to try for comprehensive holdings in twentieth-century painting and sculpture. Brown thought that it should concentrate on the most important work of certain key artists, much as it had done for every other period since the Renaissance.

Another change, which soon became highly visible, had to do with special exhibitions. In the old building, there was only one room, the so-called Central Gallery, for temporary shows, and under Walker there had been no real exhibition program. Brown, who had once yearned to be a theatre director, had other ideas. The Gallery's relatively limited approach to art history, he felt, made it all the more important to present the art of other cultures and periods in temporary loan exhibitions—especially in Washington, where almost every country maintained an embassy. The Metropolitan Museum's brash new director, Thomas Hoving (he had taken over there in December, 1966, at the age of thirty-five), was putting on more special exhibitions than that venerable institution's audience could keep up with; they ranged from a scholarly survey of "The Great Age of Fresco" to the multimedia "Harlem on My Mind," a sociological extravaganza that nearly cost him his job. Brown's first important show, "African Sculpture," was a much more successful homage to black culture than Hoving's. It included loans from thirty-six institutions, and it clearly marked a new direction for the National Gallery. A professional design consultant from New York whom Brown had hired painted the ceiling of the Central Gallery black and brought in special lighting to emphasize the dramatic power and mystery of tribal objects. A black-tie dinner—the first ever at the Gallery—was given by the Paul Mellons on opening night, with African dishes and African music and dances performed by a Ghanaian ensemble in native dress. "We had a lot of fun with that one," Brown said. "It helped to show the local community that our interest went beyond the canon of Western aesthetics and European art."

Brown hired outside designers for

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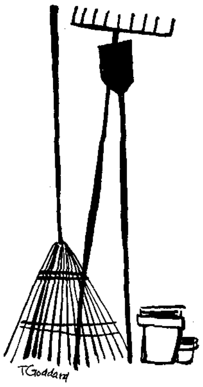
one or two other exhibitions, but he was not happy with the results. The installation of a small show of Eskimo and Northwest Indian art ("The Far North") was such a disaster that Brown fired the consultant and turned the job over to Gaillard Ravenel, a young assistant curator in the Print Department. Although Ravenel was trained as an art historian, he had demonstrated a flair for installation while he was in graduate school at the University of North Carolina. He did so well with "The Far North," and with a show of Dürer drawings and prints, that Brown decided to put him in charge of an in-house design department. That department now employs thirty-one people and exerts an extraordinary influence within the museum. Ravenel and Mark Leithauser, his principal associate, have come to be known as the most brilliant exhibition designers in the country today. Their installations have set standards that other museums try hard to match, although few museums have at their disposal the money that Ravenel and Leithauser do. The degree of leverage that Ravenel has assumed in recent years, coupled with his strong views and a somewhat abrasive manner, has brought him into conflict with a number of curators on the staff. He has very specific ideas about how works of art should be lighted and displayed, and about the quality and the condition of works that appear in his shows, and these sometimes get in the way of a curator's ideas about historical sequence and stylistic development. Brown reportedly has had to mediate some heated disputes between his curators and Ravenel but has continued to give the design department full and enthusiastic support, and the department has been a big factor in his regime.

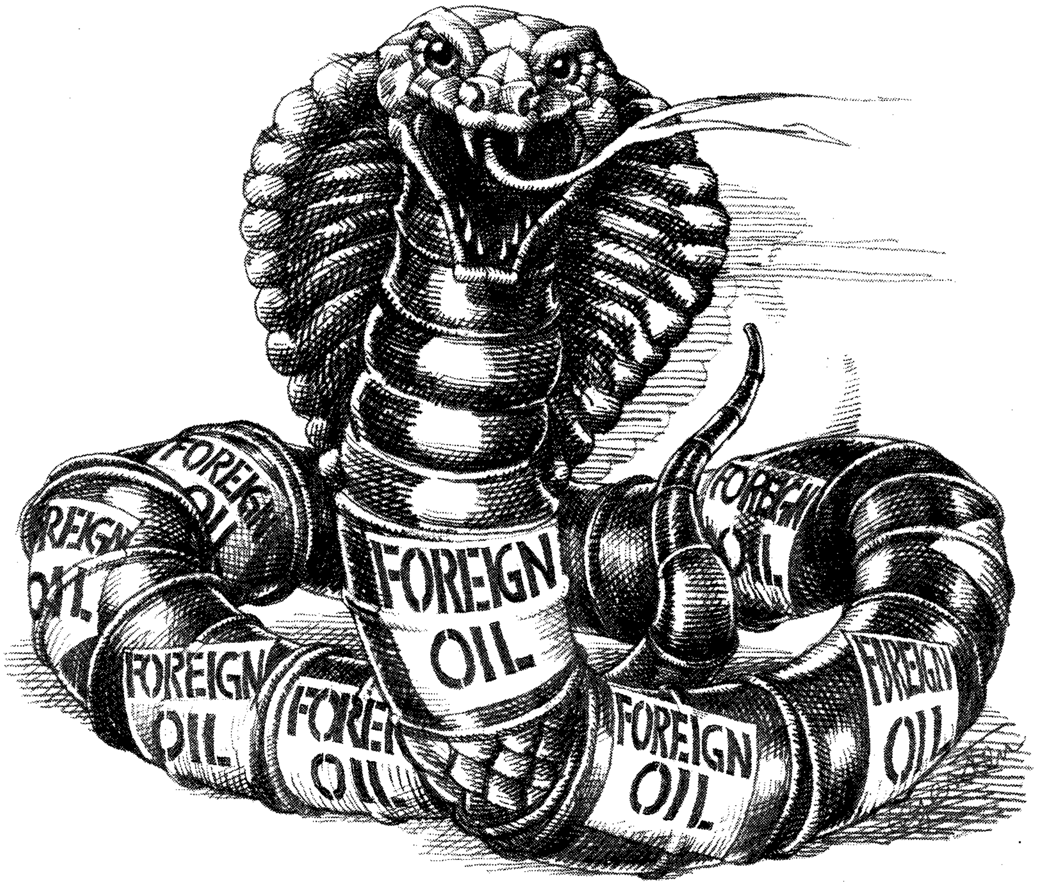


In the nineteen-seventies, the new emphasis on special exhibitions brought the National Gallery into frequent competition with the Metropolitan Museum. Both Hoving and Brown went all out to get a show called "Archaeological Finds of the People's Republic of China"—not exactly a blockbuster subject, but it featured a bronze galloping horse and a suit made of jade, and was the first big breakthrough in cultural exchanges with Red China. The Met worked through Nelson Rockefeller, who was New York's governor at the time, but Brown had a direct link to President Nixon through his foreign-policy adviser, Henry Kissinger, and Kissinger discussed the exhibition with Chinese officials on one of his secret visits to China in 1972. Brown had another well-placed ally—David Bruce, Ailsa Mellon's former husband, who had served briefly during the nineteen-forties as president of the National Gallery's first board of trustees, and was then in China as the head of the United States Liaison Office. "Our hunch was that the Chinese would want the show to open in the capital," Brown said, "and we turned out to be right." It opened in 1974 at the National Gallery, where it was seen by nearly seven hundred thousand people, and then, because the Chinese had insisted on its having a wide geographical distribution, it went on to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, in Kansas City, and the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, bypassing the Met entirely. The immensely popular "Treasures of Tutankhamun" also had its première at the National Gallery, in 1976, and wound up at the Met at the end of a six-museum United States tour. Hoving complained that his people had done all the work of negotiating with the Egyptians and organizing the exhibition but had received none of the credit.

The National Gallery was also initiating more and more special exhibitions of its own, and drawing bigger and bigger crowds. Attendance rose to a million six hundred thousand in 1976, the Bicentennial year, which the Gallery observed with a huge and complex exhibition called "The Eye of Thomas Jefferson." W. Howard Adams, that show's curator, put together what was in effect an aesthetic biography of our most aesthetically gifted President. Adams even tracked down the descendants of the Ruggieri family in Paris, whose fireworks had received nostalgic mention in a famous love letter from Jefferson to Maria Cosway; the Ruggieri family was still in the fireworks business two centuries later, he found, so he commissioned them to put on a fireworks display on opening night. It proved to be one of the most spectacular fireworks displays ever seen in the capital.

WHEN Pei's East Building opened, in 1978, the response at first was overwhelmingly positive. Pei had solved the problem of an awkward, trapezoidal site by designing a modernist building in the form of two unequal triangles: one contained the library, the study center, and new administrative and curatorial offices; the other provided ninety thousand square feet of highly flexible exhibition space, surrounding a vast glass-roofed atrium court eighty feet high. The atrium was a tour de force, all bridges and balconies and knife-edged corners and dramatic resolutions in space, but after the first wave of hosannas died down a critical reaction set in, and there were those who claimed that it was not a very good place to show works of art. Brown had insisted on a number of self-contained gallery areas that would be intimate in scale and separate from the atrium, and Pei had provided such spaces in three towers, situated at the three corners of the triangular structure. They worked well—Brown referred to them as "house museums"—but there was no getting around the fact that a very large proportion of the exhibition space in the new building was suitable mainly for the exhibition of Pei's breathtaking architecture. The East Building was a great public space and a major contribution to urban design. It was also a clarion statement of new thinking about the nature and purpose of museums. The nineteenth-century concept of an art museum as a royal palace or a temple of worship was becoming obsolete; the new, "active" museum was not simply a treasury but an agora—a theatre of visual impressions, a showplace, a community center, even a shopping mart. Plenty of people disliked this concept, of course, but it had influenced the design of a great many new museums, here and in Europe, and Pei's East Building, which the American Institute of Architects voted one of the ten best buildings ever put up in America, has, in its turn, influenced many others.

The East Building opened with six special exhibitions. Two of them were devoted to twentieth-century art, but the big show was called "The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting," and it had involved another nasty spat with Hoving. According to Hoving, he and his staff had initiated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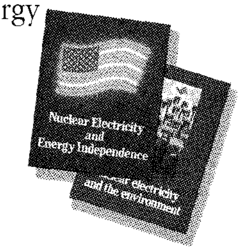
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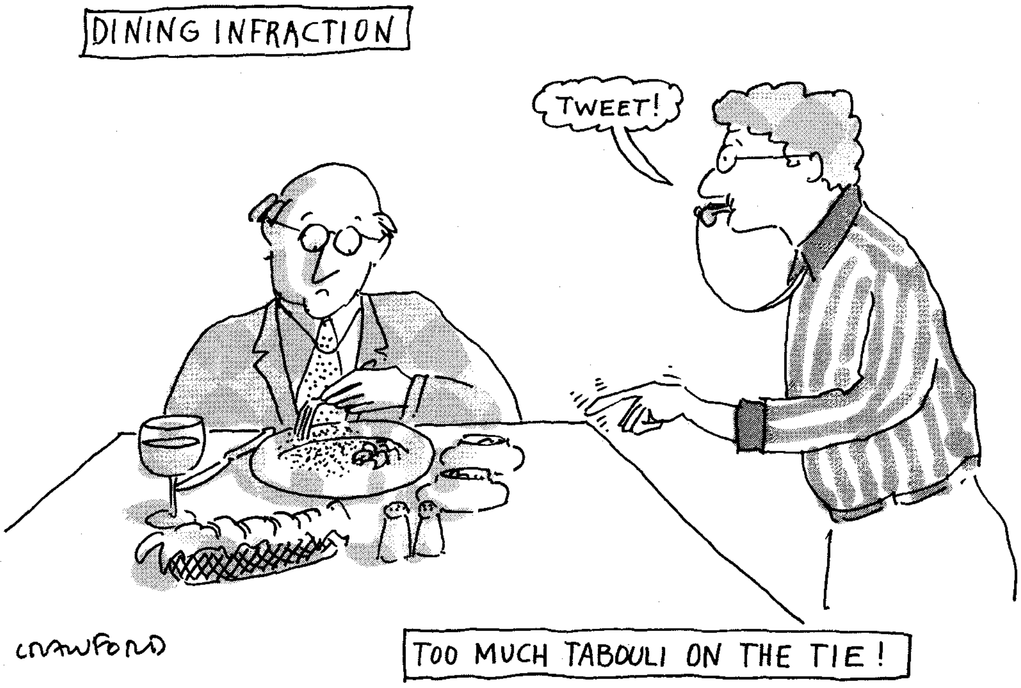
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contacts with the East German authorities in 1975 and had spent two years organizing a vast exhibition of works from the State Art Collection in Dresden, whereupon Carter Brown had jumped up and said he had been there first and the show would therefore have to open at the National Gallery. Brown's version is that of an aggrieved Mr. Nice Guy. "The day the Washington *Post* reported that our diplomatic relations with East Germany, which had been severed for some time, might be restored, I called up the State Department and registered our interest in getting a Dresden show," he told me. "I think that was in August, 1975. And, in fact, we went quite far down that road, until the State Department asked us to hold back. Larry Eagleburger, who was Kissinger's point man for Eastern Europe, said that if we went ahead with the plans, because of our relationship to the government they could be misinterpreted by the East Germans as some kind of quid, for which they would have to find a quo. He said, 'Don't go ahead.' Well, technically, with more than half our board private citizens, we could have said we were going ahead anyway, but we decided to wait until they allowed us to. Anyway, I was sitting in our auditorium the following February, listening to Rosamond Bernier give a lecture, and she said something about wasn't it wonderful to read in the New York *Times* this morning that a great show from Dresden was coming to the Metropolitan. I couldn't believe my ears. What had happened, apparently, was that when the East Germans stopped hearing from us they assumed we'd lost interest, so they approached the Met. And then Tom Hoving went barrelling over there. We got in touch with the Met, and Tom was very blustery about it. He was obviously going to try to tough it out and check us into the boards. It seemed sort of irrational, and I thought maybe we should get cooler heads at the trustee level to focus on it." A summit meeting was convened that summer at David Rockefeller's house in Seal Harbor, Maine. Douglas Dillon, the courtly head of the Metropolitan's board of trustees, came over from *his* summer house, at Dark Harbor, nearby, and Paul Mellon flew up in his private jet. Hoving and Brown, who also attended, dutifully agreed to the Treaty of Seal Harbor, under which the Dresden show would be officially coörganized by both museums. It opened in Washington in June, 1978, and came to the Met four months later.

The suite of galleries on the lowest level—below ground—of the East Building had been intended originally for special exhibitions, but it eventually became apparent that the space worked best for showing twentieth-century art, which was more and more a primary concern of Brown's. Most of the new American collectors were focussed on modern or contemporary art, and not many art museums could afford to cut themselves off from this source of support. Brown himself liked modern art—his father, as he often reminded people, had given the first lecture on Cézanne in this country, at Harvard in the nineteen-twenties. Brown was able to buy several very important modern pictures with an unrestricted acquisition fund bequeathed to the Gallery by Ailsa Mellon Bruce, among them Picasso's 1910 "Nude Woman," one of the key works of analytical Cubism; five of the late cut-paper works by Matisse; and a 1913 Kandinsky "Improvisation." But the Gallery was pitifully weak in postwar American art. The Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, which had been temporarily frozen as a reserve against huge cost overruns on the East Building, was unfrozen in 1976 to buy Jackson Pollock's "Lavender Mist," the last of Pollock's great mural-size drip paintings in private hands. Brown and his twentieth-century staff directed their main attention, though, to wheedling gifts from modern-art collectors and collections. Averell Harriman gave them five Cézannes and several other modern paintings in 1972. Ruth Carter Stevenson, David Rockefeller, Walter Annenberg, Sid Bass, Gordon Getty, Lila Acheson Wallace, John Hay Whitney, William Paley, Frederick Weisman, and a galaxy of other well-endowed persons, most of whom had previously pledged their allegiance to other museums around the country, agreed to join a Collectors Committee set up by Brown in 1974, with dues of five thousand dollars a year. Its original function was to commission works of art for the East Building from Alexander Calder, Joan Miró, Jean Arp, Anthony Caro, and Robert Motherwell (safe, predictable choices one and all), but the committee decided to stay in business, and it has provided a steady stream of modern and contemporary gifts to the Gallery. (The committee's annual dues are now ten thousand dollars.) The defection of Burton and Emily Tremaine, who once promised to bequeath their collection of postwar American art to the National Gallery but later changed their minds, has been balanced by the recent decision of Robert and Jane Meyerhoff to have their collection (which is comparable to the Tremaines' in extent and in quality) go to the Gallery when they die, to be shown at the Gallery and in their house, near Baltimore, and its adjoining private museum. Both Brown and Jack Cowart, who succeeded Carmean in 1983 as curator of twentieth-century art, say that this is a unique arrangement; the National Gallery, they insist, is not in the business of running branch museums. Collectors usually want something more than gratitude, however, and the National Gallery, which cannot offer them a wing, or a suite of contiguous galleries, has become increasingly alert to what Cowart calls "creative solutions."

CREATIVE solutions are what mark a first-rate administrator, and nobody has questioned Carter Brown's claim to that title. He has seemed to do extremely well all the things that a museum director is called on to do, and quite a few others besides. He has been able to make difficult decisions and make them fast, in part because he has been able to count on Paul Mellon's support. Curators have found that they can speak openly to him—that he will listen carefully, ask acute questions, and then, if he likes the idea, give the curator the same kind of unstinting support he got from Mellon. (In this area, he rates much higher marks than Hoving, who alienated many Metropolitan curators by ignoring their ideas and by committing them to exhibitions without consulting them.) The curatorial staff at the National Gallery had not enjoyed a very high profile under John Walker, and curators soon found that that situation was not going to change under his successor. Brown speaks for them at trustee meetings and press conferences—speaks so well, with such a thorough command of fact and concept, that in most cases the curators feel that their views are accurately represented. John Wilmerding, whom Brown hired in 1977 as curator of American art, recalls that just before the opening of his first important show at the Gallery, a 1980 exhibition called "American Light: The Luminist Movement," Brown asked for his Acoustiguide talk on it. "A day or so later, I was just astonished to hear him describe my show to the press," Wilmerding says. "He had memorized not only my words but the whole point and emphasis of the show, all the nuances behind the facts. He speaks for the museum, all right, and in that sense I suppose you could say that he takes the credit. But he also remembers to praise others, especially guest curators—and more and more so in recent years." Wilmerding, who became the deputy director and was looked upon for a time as Brown's eventual successor, left the Gallery in 1988 to accept a dual position as Sarofim Professor of American Art at Princeton and visiting curator of the Metropolitan Museum's new Henry R. Luce Center for the Study of American Art. His departure was amicable, and he retains a high regard for Carter Brown, whose grip on the top job in any case showed no signs of slackening.

Brown has made some distinguished curatorial appointments, and most of the current curators say that working for him is a stimulating and enjoyable experience. Most, but not all. Charles Stuckey, hired in 1985 as curator of nineteenth-century painting, left two years later, to become curator of twentieth-century painting and sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago. "I don't think Carter would want to work for Carter," Stuckey told me recently. "He's so brilliant, and he keeps such tight control of the reins—I can't imagine that he himself would want to work under that sort of regime."

There is something almost endearing about Brown's zest for the job, and his obvious pleasure in being so good at it. The staff jokes about his tendency to act like a head of state engaged in bilateral negotiations with his peers in Vienna or Moscow or Rome. They once concocted a fantasy plan to publish a collection of Carter Brown's prefaces to exhibitions at the National Gallery, most of which are written for him by members of his staff; a preface to this Book of Prefaces would have pointed out Brown's remarkable ability to write in so many different voices. He is unfailingly upbeat and cheerful in his relations with the staff, no matter what may be going on in his personal life, which is off-limits even to his closest associates. None of the staff members felt they knew him well enough to offer condolences over the breakup of his first marriage, for example. He had married Constance Mellon Byers, Paul's second cousin, in 1971; they separated in 1973. His second wedding, in 1976, to Pamela Braga Drexel, took place in the Henry VII Chapel of Westminster Ab-

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bey, and was followed by a honeymoon in China. This marriage struck most of the couple's friends as a great success, and news of their separation, twelve years later, came as a shock to the Gallery staff. The uninformed consensus was that Carter Brown poured so much of his energy, intelligence, and imagination into his job that there wasn't much left for private life. He has joint custody of John Carter Brown IV and Elissa, the two children from his second marriage.

"Carter makes up for his lack of emotional expression through his career achievements—that's the way he expresses himself." The observation comes from Paul Matisse, a grandson of the painter, who was Carter's classmate at the Arizona Desert School and at Harvard, and it suggests that Brown may be as happy a man as he usually seems to be. David Finley and John Walker brought in the works of art that made the National Gallery one of the world's great museums, but Carter Brown has broadened the scope of the place and consistently enhanced its reputation. It has become a major center of learning and art-historical research, thanks to the library and the study center that have developed under Brown's supervision. The National Gallery's catalogues and scholarly publications are as good as anything being done in the field, and its fellowship programs have been a boon to scholars and a training ground for young people going into museum work. On the populist level, attendance has grown spectacularly since the East Building opened, reaching a high of almost nine million in 1986, the year of Brown's "Treasure Houses of Britain" show. The National Gallery is by far the most heavily attended art museum in the country, yet it never seems to *feel* as crowded as the Metropolitan on a busy Saturday.

The silent partner in all these achievements—until 1985, when he retired from the board of trustees—was Paul Mellon, whose astonishing generosity made many of them possible. Paul Richard, who as the art critic of the Washington *Post* has covered exhibitions at the National Gallery for twenty years, believes that the museum really reflects Mellon's influence more than Walker's or Brown's. "The kindness of the staff, the understated elegance of the galleries—it's a little like being in one of Mellon's houses," he says. "He has tried to make our lives more like his." The combination of élitism and populism which gives the National Gallery its unique ambience among the world's great museums—the quiet good taste, the expensive detailing, and the generous use of space, all for the benefit of a public that pays nothing to enjoy them—suggests an aristocratic tradition that Brown and Mellon share, and that Mellon has been able to maintain. Mellon once said, referring to the cost overruns on the East Building's construction, "I think everyone felt this was a situation in which you couldn't cut corners."

Only once has Paul Mellon intervened directly in the running of the National Gallery, and it is typical of the man that he now speaks somewhat regretfully of that action. It involved the cleaning of "The Mill," the famous Rembrandt from the Widener collection. The English critic Roger Fry once described this painting as "the most complete expression of the dramatic mood in landscape that has ever been achieved in Western art." Since 1911, when Widener bought it, a number of European Rembrandt experts have decided that the painting is not by Rembrandt after all. "The Mill" had acquired so many layers of varnish over the years, and had become so dark as a result, that detailed analysis of it was virtually impossible, and this is why Brown and his staff decided, in 1978, to clean it. For many admirers, however, the painting's golden-brown tonality evoked an air of poetry and mystery that seemed quintessentially Rembrandtesque.

Paul Mellon learned about the cleaning from an article in the Style section of the Washington *Post*, which he read on an airplane that was taking him to Pittsburgh for a meeting of the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust. "This upset me very much," he said later. "I thought that as president I should have known what was going on, especially since this was one of the most important pictures in the Gallery. And I thought, Just wait until John Walker sees this, he's going to faint—Johnny was also going to be at the meeting in Pittsburgh. Well, John Walker was *very* upset. He said, 'They're going to ruin it.' When I got back to Washington, I talked to Carter about it right away, and I said, 'Let's stop everything being done in the con-

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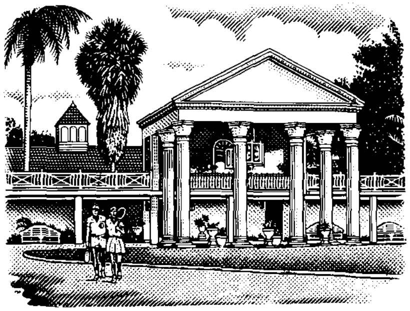
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servation department until the trustees have a chance to take a look at this thing and see if they want to go ahead.'"

The National Gallery's conservation department was quite new at the time. It had been John Walker's firm belief that the cleaning and the restoration of paintings were perilous, last-resort measures, to be avoided whenever possible; what little cleaning he permitted was done by a part-time conservator. Carter Brown had established an in-house conservation unit, though, and its two full-time conservators were stunned when the word came down that Mellon had decreed a moratorium on their work. The incident received considerable publicity, and it became an issue in a larger controversy that was brewing then between the so-called scientific school of paintings conservation, which relied on new technologies, and those who argued that aesthetic judgments were being slighted. The trustees listened to expert opinions from eight well-known museum directors and art experts, and eventually decided to let the in-house team proceed with the cleaning of "The Mill." Any planned restorations of important pictures are now reported well in advance to the trustees, who may or may not cherish the awesome responsibility for decision-making in this area.

"The Mill" certainly is a different picture since it was cleaned. The golden-brown tonality is gone, and the central image, a windmill on a high bluff over a river, stands out clearly against a vivid and turbulent sky. Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr., the Gallery's curator of Northern Baroque painting, was not certain before the cleaning that the picture was by Rembrandt, but now he is. "Stylistically, all the elements now add up much more convincingly," he told me. His judgment runs counter to that of the Rembrandt Research Project, in Amsterdam, a group of scholars which has been subjecting all works attributed to Rembrandt to the most rigorous scrutiny; they assign it to Ferdinand Bol, one of Rembrandt's more gifted assistants. John Walker, vigorous in retirement, added a revised note on the painting for the 1984 edition of a book he wrote on the National Gallery, in which he said that "it has gained in colorfulness but has lost in sublimity." David Bull, the National Gallery's current chief conservator,

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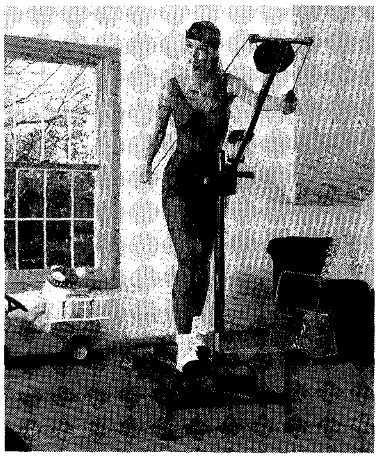

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told me last spring that the picture was not damaged physically in the cleaning process, but that in his opinion it has lost so much of its aura of mystery that it is "no longer a great painting." Controversies over cleaning and restoration are never really laid to rest, and bitter feelings about "The Mill" persist. As Paul Mellon remarked to Charles Parkhurst at the time, "It certainly is easier to get into these things than it is to get out of them."

LIFE after the Mellons has become the great challenge for Carter Brown in recent years. Brown has a smooth working relationship with John R. Stevenson, a Washington lawyer, who succeeded Paul Mellon as the trustee president of the Gallery, and he has had notable success in attracting financial support, not only from wealthy Washingtonians but from collectors and benefactors in other parts of the country. A major campaign launched in 1981 to establish a fifty-million-dollar fund for acquisitions was oversubscribed, raising fifty-six million dollars from more than a hundred individuals, foundations, and corporations willing to contribute at least a hundred thousand dollars apiece. (This seemed like a lot of money at the time, but it has become less impressive in an art market where a single van Gogh can bring eighty-two and a half million dollars.) For the National Gallery's fiftieth anniversary, Brown is taking another approach. Instead of going after funds, he is asking virtually every important collector in the United States to consider giving one work of art (major, of course) to "the nation" next year. This is going to be a formidable test of his powers of persuasion. The recent changes in the tax law which severely restrict the amount of the deductions that can be claimed for gifts to public institutions, coupled with the apparently unending rise in prices for important works of art, have had a devastating effect on museums around the country—most of them estimate that their donations have fallen off by more than sixty per cent. Although the National Gallery has not yet released any information on the progress of the fiftieth-anniversary campaign, Brown hints that things are going very well. The campaign got off to a rousing start, at any rate, with the well-publicized gift of van Gogh's "Roses," from Mrs. Averell Harriman, whose frequent escort at Washington social functions these days is J. Carter Brown.

If the fiftieth-anniversary campaign brings more gifts on the level of "Roses," it will help to defuse a charge—made by Hoving, among others—that Carter Brown's regime has not been notable for acquisitions. Brown finds this criticism unfair. A list of the Gallery's more than seventeen thousand acquisitions since 1970 includes major works of art from Paul Mellon and several other donors. As for purchases, the era when museums could acquire more than one or two really important Old Masters in a decade ended long before Brown became director. (The Getty Trust and the Kimbell Art Museum, in Fort Worth, can still afford to buy masterpieces, but even the mighty Metropolitan has had relatively slim pickings since it purchased Velázquez's "Juan de Pareja," in 1970, and then was heavily criticized for selling off several pictures to pay for it.) About the only field of painting and sculpture in which most museums can afford to buy these days is twentieth-century art, and there Brown has done quite well. Although the Gallery's twentieth-century holdings will never approach those of the Museum of Modern Art in completeness or in over-all quality, visitors can get an in-depth exposure there to the achievements of modernism, rather grandly displayed.

So far, the National Gallery has not run afoul of the latter-day congressional Donderos, who view modern art with suspicion and hostility. The species is far from extinct, as the current brouhaha over the National Endowment for the Arts and its purported sponsorship of "obscene" art makes clear. Brown has firm views on this subject, which he does not hesitate to express. "The arts are not just a procurement program," he said recently. "You don't go out and use government purchase orders to produce cultural greatness. You have to create a climate in which that emerges, and it's notoriously difficult to tell what will become great—you need hindsight, and the freedom to experiment, and a certain tolerance. And so it's sad when you see things mixing into a situation that should be allowed to proceed quietly—evangelical television and other means representing a rather narrow point of view being used to generate enormous mail and enormous pressure on Congress, and not giving credit to the extraordinary job that the Endowment has done over the years." Brown's public statements on the issue have impressed a number of his fellow museum directors, coming, as they do, from someone who heads an institution that relies primarily on federal funds.

Criticism of Brown within the museum world persists, nevertheless, and much of it has to do with the emphasis he has placed on special exhibitions. Sydney Freedberg, the internationally admired Renaissance scholar, whom Brown hired in 1983, and who retired as chief curator in 1988, is said by former associates to have been thoroughly disillusioned by what he considered the overemphasis on such exhibitions at the National Gallery. (Freedberg refuses, politely but firmly, to be interviewed on the subject.) The prominence achieved by the Gallery over the last decade has certainly depended in large part on its temporary exhibitions, for which Brown is pleased to take credit. Even a cursory listing suggests the range and popular appeal of these big shows: "The Splendor of Dresden," "American Light: The Luminist Movement," "Rodin Rediscovered," "El Greco of Toledo," "Watteau," "Old Master Drawings from the Albertina," "Impressionist to Early Modern Paintings from the U.S.S.R." (one of four major Soviet exhibitions organized with the coöperation of Armand Hammer), "Henri Matisse: The Early Years in Nice," "Georgia O'Keeffe," "The Art of Paul Gauguin," "Japan: The Shaping of Daimyo Culture," and, of course, "The Treasure Houses of Britain," which was, in a way, the apotheosis of Carter Brown's career achievements.

Many of the exhibitions originated elsewhere or were organized by other museums (which nevertheless had to agree to let them appear first at the National Gallery), but "Treasure Houses" was Brown's particular brainchild. It was a hymn of praise to the English country house, viewed as a background for political life, agriculture, sport, intellectual life, and art collecting, over a period of five hundred years. A lifelong Anglophile, like his father (and like Paul Mellon and *his* father), Brown had fallen in love with the country-house idea when he went to the Stowe School. He raised the money for the exhibition—most of it from the Ford Motor Company. He persuaded the Prince and Princess of Wales to act as official sponsors, and he talked most of the individual owners into lending the paintings, sculptures, and decorative-art objects that he and his curators and his designers decided they should have. The flexibility of the East Building was fully demonstrated by Ravenel and Leithauser, who used their lavish installation budget for this show to build Tudor, Jacobean, Neo-classical, and Palladian rooms, whose details and appointments were often exact replicas of famous originals. Eight hundred precious objects arrived and departed intact, under the supervision of Gervaise Jackson-Stops, the architectural adviser to the National Trust in London, who was the guest curator of the exhibition. Carter Brown, the master impresario, was in his element during the run of the show. Walking through it with distinguished visitors such as the Prince and Princess of Wales, he was relaxed, urbane, and thoroughly at home. Less exalted visitors, listening to his comments through Acoustiguide earphones, could hardly fail to notice the delight he took in every detail of the installation—a delight that came through in such unguarded, haute-Wasp adjectives as "fabulous" and "sort of neat." A few critics sneered at the show's Anglophilia—*Time's* Robert Hughes referred to it as "Brideshead Redecorated"—but the public seemed to love it as much as Brown did, or almost.

Although the decision to show Andrew Wyeth's "Helga Paintings," in 1987, was resoundingly decried on aesthetic grounds, and last spring's exhibition of paintings from the collection of Emil Bührle, a Swiss industrialist who supplied arms to the Nazis in the Second World War, was castigated by the *Times'* Michael Kimmelman on moral and ethical grounds, most of Brown's special exhibitions have fared well with the art critics. A growing number of art historians argue, however, that in this age of mass travel there is no excuse for subjecting fragile Old Master paintings to the wear and tear—and the risks of much worse—that comes from sending them around the world to special exhibitions. The huge crowds that flock to these shows have become a major factor in museum bud-

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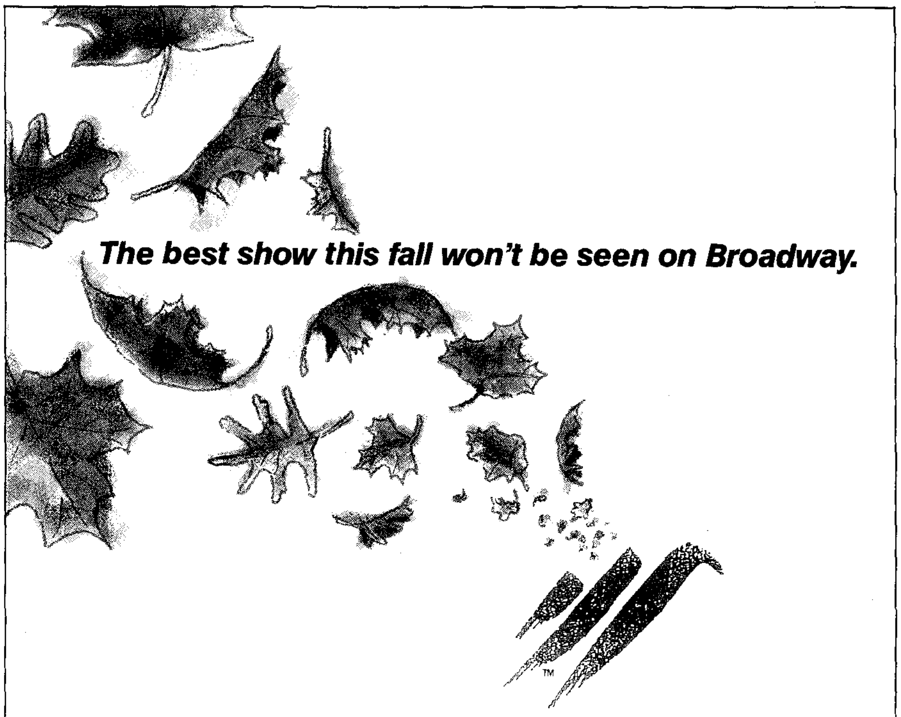

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gets and museum prestige. Supreme masterpieces are lent in the expectation of comparable loans in return or, upon occasion, as a sign of international good will—what the art historian Francis Haskell recently called "the continuation of politics by other means." But do such ends justify such risks? Carter Brown addresses this issue with characteristic aplomb. "My theory is that temporary exhibitions are very different from the experience you get with the permanent collection, where you can browse, and look, and, if you're lucky, get taken over by works of art," he told me. "Temporary exhibitions occupy the dimension of time. Theatre and music have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and in a temporary exhibition the point is to give people a sense of this specialness, of a story being told. As the result of an enormous amount of effort and expense, and even some risk, this concatenation of objects is here, but not for very long, and that gives one a sense that one must meet it halfway. Special exhibitions offer the best of two worlds—original works of art, and the scholarly-intellectual apparatus that has been brought to bear on them. That's worth all the effort and all the risks, in my opinion. We don't make money on our shows. We don't charge admission. We do them because we think it is part of our mission."

The problem is that big loan exhibitions have become so expensive that nearly everyone in the museum field predicts their imminent demise. People have been predicting it for more than a decade, without much evidence to bear them out, but Brown himself agrees that the blockbusters probably have had their day. The main reason is the phenomenal boom in the art market, which has driven the price of major works of art so high that it costs a fortune to insure them while they are on tour. In the nineteen-seventies, the United States government undertook to indemnify loans from foreign museums up to a limit of fifty million dollars per exhibition, but now that one van Gogh can cost more than that the indemnity doesn't go very far. Like other museums, the National Gallery has scheduled fewer loan shows over the next five years, and its curators are being encouraged to think in terms of smaller exhibitions, featuring works in the permanent collection.

How this prospective decline in the show-biz aspects of museum life will affect Carter Brown is anybody's guess. For years, his colleagues have speculated about what jobs Brown might aspire to if he ever decided to leave the National Gallery. It is surmised that he hoped to be named Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution when Dillon Ripley retired, in 1984. After the "Treasure Houses" show, it occurred to any number of people that he would make an ideal Ambassador to the Court of St. James's. Brown denies having had any interest in either post. "I think I have the ideal job," he often says, and those who work with him believe he means it.

◆

As we sat in his sunny office one day last spring, Brown gave me a progress report on "Circa 1492," which, in spite of the imminent demise of loan shows, was shaping up as the most ambitious special exhibition ever put on at the National Gallery. Merrill Lynch had decided against becoming one of the corporate sponsors, he said—it was cutting back on expenditures in all areas. But Ameritech, in Chicago, and the Republic National Bank of New York had come aboard, and so had Nomura Securities and the Mitsui Taiyo Kobe Bank, in Tokyo; he was still working on a European corporate sponsor. The Tokyo National Museum had agreed to lend some of its greatest treasures, meanwhile, and the relevant authorities of the two Chinas were being equally coöperative. "The concept of horizontality has really fired people's imaginations—this idea of 1492 as a moment when the world began to think of itself as a world," Brown said. "The timing seems to be right." He himself was just back from a trip to Europe, where he had visited fifteen cities in ten days and solidified some important loans. "Solidified" might not be the operative word, he said, leaning back in his chair, his eyes half closing and then closing altogether as his voice level dropped to the nearly inaudible range. There were so many official agencies to deal with in Italy, and so many opportunities for official changes of mind about lending fragile paintings on wood panels, that nothing could ever be taken for granted. "It's always a gamble," he murmured, smiling to show that this was all part of the fun. One way or another, the show would go on.

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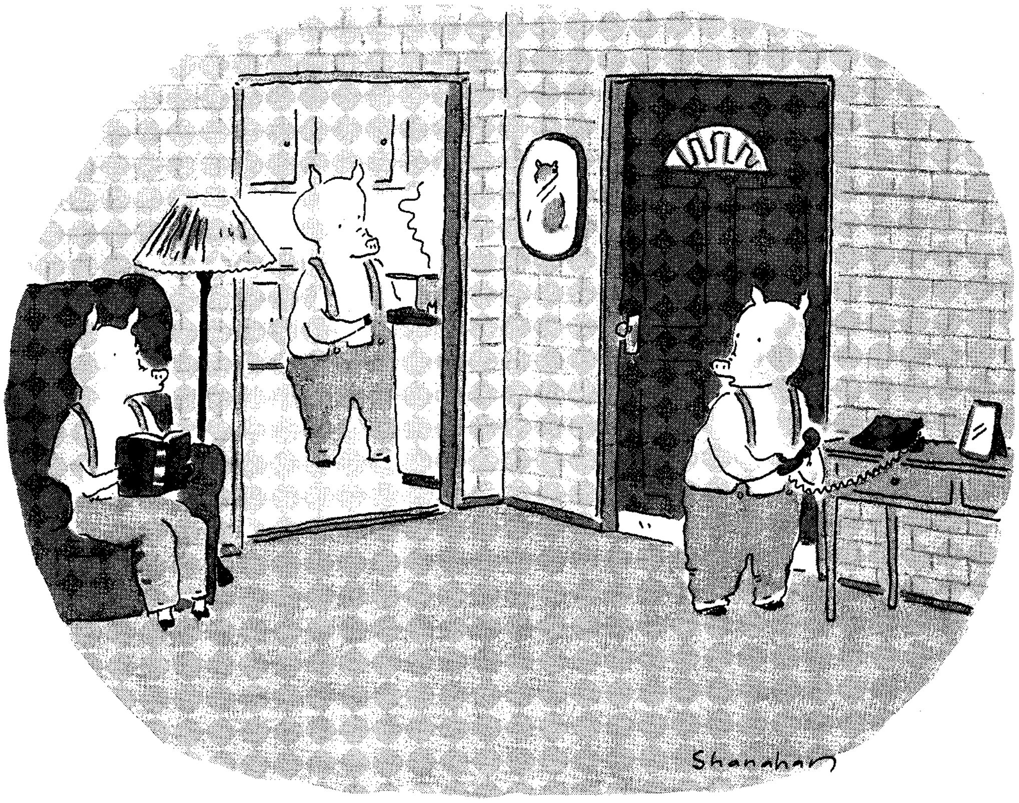
THE Seattle Opera's summer production was of Prokofiev's "War and Peace"—the first new staging of the work by an American company since Sarah Caldwell mounted it, in Boston and at Wolf Trap, sixteen years ago. The Seattle show was large, ample, and successful: nine performances were given, to full houses. There is no definitive edition of the long, unwieldy opera. In 1942, Prokofiev submitted an eleven-scene version of "War and Peace," in piano score, to the Soviet Committee on the Arts. The committee approved of the lyrical scenes but asked for the patriotic contents to be strengthened, with a bigger role for the chorus. Prokofiev complied, and after concert performances in Moscow, in 1944 and 1945, a Leningrad production of "War and Peace," with the opera divided into two parts, was planned. Prokofiev added two scenes—the St. Petersburg ball to "Peace" and the war council at Fili to "War." The first part was produced in 1946. The second went into rehearsal, but before it could reach the stage the composer was accused of "formalist perversions and anti-dramatic tendencies alien to the Soviet people," and "War and Peace" was withdrawn. Prokofiev continued to work at his opera, adding extra patriotic episodes and devising possible one-evening versions. He died in 1953. "War and Peace" was first staged in Florence, two months after his death. The first Russian production was in 1955, in Leningrad. America heard the opera two years later, in an NBC television presentation. It joined the Bolshoi repertory in 1959. In all these performances, the work was much abridged. A more nearly complete and much acclaimed production was given by the English National Opera in 1972. The Seattle performance, which lasted about four hours, was similarly extensive but differed in its choice of what to include, what to cut. Some pages were probably being heard for the first time.

The opera begins with a powerful choral epigraph: "Armies from twelve European lands had united and burst into Russia. . . . Forth to battle went the Russian people in defense of their land: they rose in all their terrible might against the invader." The first seven scenes, "Peace," are concerned with the meeting and betrothal of Natasha and Prince Andrei, Natasha's attempted elopement with Anatol, and Pierre Bezukhov's realization that he loves Natasha. They span the years from 1809 to 1812, closing with the news of Napoleon's invasion. There are glittering dances at the Petersburg ball and at a Bezukhov party, and there is much lyrically beautiful music, close to that of Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet." (Some of it derives from incidental music conceived for a 1936 dramatic presentation of Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin": Natasha's theme once belonged to Lensky, Andrei's to Tatiana.) "War" begins at the Battle of Borodino, with scenes in the Russian lines and at Napoleon's headquarters. There follows the Fili council, at which Field Marshal Kutuzov decides to abandon Moscow; and the French occupation of the deserted city, a cinematic sequence of brief episodes. Then comes a poignant personal interlude: Andrei, dying, is reunited with Natasha. The final scene is another cluster of brief episodes, concerned with the French retreat and partisan activity, and crowned by a heroic chorus of thanksgiving and rejoicing.

Two strains of Russian opera were here brought together: a drama of individual emotions, in the line of Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin" and "Queen of Spades," and the suffering and struggles of a people, as in the choral scenes of Mussorgsky's "Boris Godunov" and "Khovanshchina." The opera could be subtitled "Lyric Scenes from Tolstoy's Novel." It is a theatre piece intended for audiences familiar with the book. If the Moscow and the retreat-from-Moscow episodes seem needlessly scrappy and disorderly, and leave a confused impression, that is no doubt partly by design (in Tolstoy there are passages where war's confusions are conveyed in a similar fashion) and partly because that initial design was further disturbed by the demands of the committee. But Prokofiev was an expert in the required vein, and his "War and Peace" public music transcends that of his official cantatas, effective though those are. He was a born



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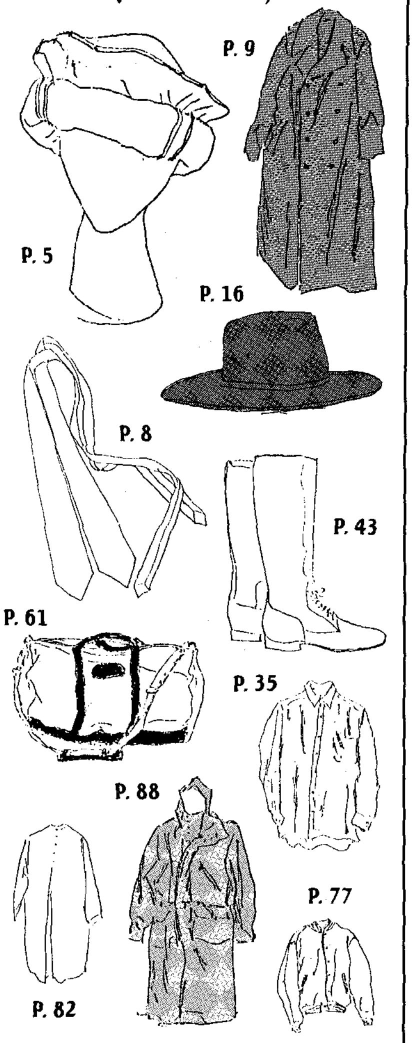

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theatre composer, with a flair for vocal gesture and for exciting instrumental colors. Some of the librettos he devised and set are maladroit, but all his operas prove exhilarating in performance. Their music has verve. "The Fiery Angel" is the most strangely personal of them, "The Love of Three Oranges" the most carefully poised and polished. "War and Peace," despite the provisional nature of the overabundant surviving material, is the noblest and greatest.

The Seattle performance was sung in Russian, and this lessened its impact. But four of the singers had come from the Kirov: Vladimir Chernov, the Andrei; Nicolai Ohotnikov, the Kutuzov; and Alexander Morozov and Miroslav Romanchuk, who took a variety of small roles. The conductor was Mark Ermler, from the Bolshoi. Francesca Zambello, the director, and John Conklin, the designer, contained the huge epic within a single set: a spacious white neoclassical hall, assembled from elements of different Hermitage rooms—not symmetrical but with varied columns, cornices, pilasters, and portals in elegant proportion. In "Peace," this frame provided an evocation of Imperial Russia at its most splendid and confident; during "War," the aristocratic details began to crumble and decay. The set, unroofed, was large enough to admit indications of the individual scenes—silver birches for the Rostov country estate, chandeliers in the salons, bastions and bulwarks for the war scenes—without indoor-outdoor awkwardness. Under Neil Peter Jampolis's skillful lights, architecture not forming part of any particular scene faded from view. Scene followed scene with the cinematic continuity of Prokofiev's intention. The costumes, designed by Bruno Schwengl, tempered historical realism with theatrical stylization.

Sheri Greenawald was a moving Natasha—a shade peaky of voice at first, but later free and full. From the start, she was an arresting actress. Mr. Chernov has a baritone of beautiful timbre, but he was a dull performer, inexpressive in mien and in phrasing, and with little notion of legato; Andrei showed small love for Natasha. James Hoback's Anatol was dashing and credible. Victoria Vergara's Hélène was lustrous to look at but uneven of voice. Mr. Ohotnikov aimed, perhaps, at stressing the downright, blunt nature of Kutuzov, the people's general, but sounded merely routine, without the sentiment and passion that others bring to the role. His aria was reduced to a single verse, and since he underplayed its emotion one did not object to a cut that would otherwise have been cruel. There are over sixty roles in "War and Peace," and most of them were ably taken. Singers who deserve especial mention are Luretta Bybee (Princess Maria Bolkonsky), Philip Skinner (Count Rostov, Natasha's father), Archie Drake (the eccentric old Prince Bolkonsky), Julian Patrick (Napoleon), and Paul Gudas (Platon, the peasant who befriends Pierre). Pierre is the awkward role. He is the protagonist, pretty well, of the novel; his reflections in peace and in war strive to make sense of the whirling events. Although there have been "Anna Karenina" operas without a Levin, Prokofiev could hardly omit Pierre. But because he is a less evidently dramatic, less operatic character than the others he seems not to have caught the composer's imagination as they did. The music that Prokofiev found for him is more dutiful than vivid. Peter Kazaras did what he could with the part; perhaps only a Jon Vickers could bring it to life.

Mr. Ermler was a shade disappointing—a conductor *sound* rather than inspiring. Although the orchestra was drawn from the adept Seattle Symphony, and the Seattle Opera chorus is famous, one has heard the dances played with greater rhythmic zest (they were well choreographed, by Vassili Sulich) and the choruses more fervently shaped. Nevertheless, this ambitious "War and Peace"—thoughtfully conceived, carefully cast, and executed with high accomplishment—made a great impression. A landmark in the American annals. —ANDREW PORTER

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AFRICAN DEMOCRACY

MUCH of Africa is being swept by changes similar to those which overwhelmed Eastern and Central Europe last year. Within weeks of each other early this year, Félix Huphouët-Boigny, who has been President of the Ivory Coast for thirty years, and Omar Bongo, who has been President of Gabon for twenty-three years, announced, after riots and demonstrations in both their countries, that they would open their political systems to other parties. Zaire's President for twenty-five years, Mobutu Sésé Séko, who is widely regarded outside Africa as one of the continent's more repressive and corrupt leaders, declared in April that he would allow more than one political party, but he made it clear that he intends to hold on to real power. In Zambia, where there were riots and an attempted coup in late June, Kenneth Kaunda, who has been that country's President ever since it gained its independence, in 1964, has reluctantly called a referendum next year on whether there should be a multiparty or a one-party system. The prospects for democracy in any of these countries are still speculative—a multiparty system is no guarantee of democracy—and even if they are realized the vast majority of the people in the fifty-two countries that belong to the Organization of African Unity will continue to live under one-party, authoritarian regimes. The foundations of one-party rule in Africa are not primarily ideological, as they were in Eastern Europe. Indeed, the African governments that were based on Marxist-Leninist principles, such as those in Angola, Benin, and Mozambique, have been the ones most affected by the changes in Eastern Europe, and some of these are more likely to become democratic than the non-Communist one-party governments. African leaders have put forward as a leading argument for the one-party African state that a proliferation of parties would encourage tribalism over nationalism. In addition, the leaders maintain, with the support of many of their country's intellectuals, that multiparty systems were forced upon them by the colonial powers and are not consonant with African traditions and cultures, and that their countries are not yet sufficiently developed for democracy to take root. In part, these arguments are rationalizations by those in power to enable them to hold on to power. But not all are wholly without justification.

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In the past, Africa's dictators would align, or threaten to align, with the Soviet Union or the United States in exchange for the support that allowed them to stay in power. Now, just as the changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are pushing African countries into uncertain political terrain, the end of the Cold War has begun to alter American foreign policy in the Third World. It is now easier for America's policies to match its democratic principles and rhetoric, but there is still uncertainty in Washington on exactly how to proceed in advancing democracy. In Africa, how the end of the Cold War has affected American policy has been most visible in Kenya, where the American Ambassador has been astonishingly outspoken in support of democracy. That candor has created resentment among powerful Kenyan political leaders and caused unease in the State Department, where the Ambassador's style conflicts with traditional diplomacy.

If a certain level of economic, intellectual, and political development is a prerequisite for democracy, then the one country of Africa that might seem to be most ready for democracy is Kenya. The Kenya African National Union, or KANU, has ruled it since independence, in 1963, and since 1982 has been the only legal party. Kenya has enjoyed a political stability almost unprecedented in Africa; since the independence movement for African nations began, some thirty years ago, only six African heads of state out of more than a hundred and fifty who have left office did so voluntarily; the others either died in office, or were assassinated, or deposed in coups. Kenya's first President, Jomo Kenyatta, died in office in 1978, and was succeeded by Daniel arap Moi, his Vice-President, who is still President. Kenya's relative political tranquillity was shaken two months ago. Following the arrest of several of the advocates of a multiparty system, there were riots, looting, and demonstrations. The link between the demonstrations and the demands for multiparty democracy was somewhat tenuous; those who took to the streets were mostly poor and unemployed young people, protesting their economic plight. The riots lasted just four days, in part because of a tough response by the police—at least twenty people were killed—but also, it seemed, because there was not a sufficient level of discontent or organization to sustain street protests. In the aftermath of the riots, the International Bar Association, saying that it was concerned about the safety of its delegates and the detention of several lawyers who were advocates of a multiparty system, cancelled the annual convention it had been scheduled to hold in Nairobi, the capital city, in September. But when the riots were over Nairobi was as safe as, if not safer than, New York, where the lawyers' group decided to hold its convention, and Kenya's game parks were as safe for tourists as Central Park.

Economically, Kenyans are generally far better off than most other Africans. For most of the nineteen-seventies and in the early nineteen-eighties, the growth of Kenya's economy outstripped that of its population, even though Kenya's birthrate is one of the highest in the world. What were once market centers have become small towns. The middle class is growing. Businessmen are investing. Cranes are erecting more and more high-rise office buildings on both sides of Uhuru Highway, the six-lane boulevard that runs through Nairobi. The country has a good road network; the phones work most of the time; the postal system is generally quick and reliable. Not all Kenyans have benefitted from the modernization and development, of course. In the northern reaches of the country, nomadic tribes, such as the Boran, the Samburu, the Turkana, and the Gabbra, live in traditional huts, rely on a barter economy, and put their children to work tending cattle and goats.

Over all, about sixty per cent of the people in Kenya are literate—a high percentage by African standards—and it is not difficult for Kenyans to stay well informed. International papers and magazines are more readily available in Nairobi than in Johannesburg. Though domestic publications practice self-censorship, two daily tabloids, the *Nation* and the *Standard*, provide thirty or forty pages of local, national, and international coverage, business, sports, and features, and freed of the government constraints their already high journalistic standards would develop further. A third daily, the Kenya *Times*, which is a tabloid with color photographs, is the KANU paper, but it also publishes opposition views. A news magazine, *The Weekly Review*, has few equals in the Third World. Though there is a widespread feeling among Kenyans that in recent years Hilary Ng'weno, its founder and editor, has become less critical of the government, he has provided thorough coverage of the multiparty debate, with no blatant bias in favor of the government. After Henry Okullu, an Anglican bishop in Kenya, declared support for the multiparty system and urged that a President should be limited to two five-year terms of service, Ng'weno ran a favorable article on the Bishop, describing him as intelligent and articulate.

THE movement for a multiparty system in Kenya began slowly, and has often seemed on the verge of perishing. Last New Year's Day, in a sermon by the Reverend Timothy Njoya, at Nairobi's St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, the minister told his congregation that African leaders needed to reëxamine their preference for single-party systems in the light of events in Eastern Europe. Njoya's suggestion wasn't widely supported by other church leaders or by politicians; indeed, about the only voices to join the minister's were those of a few lawyers who had already earned a reputation as dissidents. In the February issue of *The Nairobi Law Monthly*, Gibson Kamau Kuria, one of the country's most prominent civil-rights lawyers, who had been detained for ten months after suing the government in 1987 on behalf of three political detainees, wrote, "Since the multiparty system works elsewhere and has previously worked in Kenya, one would like to know the aspect of our human nature which rendered us incapable of making it work after 1982." The *Law Monthly* itself is the work of another dissident—Gitobu Imanyara, who, beginning in 1984, spent two years in solitary confinement. He had drawn the government's wrath by defending Air Force personnel who were charged with involvement in a 1982 coup attempt. Interspersed with legal analyses and the text of judicial opinions, which only lawyers would bother to read, Imanyara has published articles that challenge the government's limiting of independent views. When the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy's daughter Kerry came to present Kuria with the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award (he was unable to go to the United States to receive it, because the government had taken away his passport), her visit was the cover story.

Responding to those lawyers who were advocating a multiparty system, President Moi charged that they were on "the payroll of foreign masters" and were "being used to perpetuate the divide-and-rule policy used by colonial powers before independence." Members of Kenya's Parliament accused the *Law Monthly* of being subversive, and some of them said that it should be closed; it wasn't, but the offices were raided by plainclothes policemen. KANU's *Times* announced in a headline in early April, "IT'S ONE PARTY OR WE PERISH," and politicians rushed to declare their fealty to Moi and the one-party system. The magnitude of the reaction was hard to comprehend. The

Law Monthly is published out of three rooms on the fourth floor of a dilapidated building in central Nairobi, and its circulation is small; no other church leaders had joined Njoya; and no prominent politicians were advocating a multiparty system. Nor were there any street demonstrations, as there were at that time in the Ivory Coast and Gabon. The Kenyan politicians in power seemed to be intent on burying the multiparty issue before it could come to life, and it appeared that they would succeed. Then, in late April, Bishop Okullu endorsed a multiparty system, and ten days later two former Cabinet Ministers—Kenneth Matiba and Charles Rubia—held a press conference and called for repeal of the 1982 constitutional amendment that made Kenya a one-party state, the immediate dissolution of Parliament, and a national referendum on the country's political system. That same day, Smith Hempstone, the American Ambassador to Kenya, in a speech to the Nairobi Rotary Club, said that in dispensing aid the United States Congress was likely to look more favorably on countries that practiced political pluralism and multiparty democracy.

Moi immediately branded Matiba and Rubia as "tribalists and traitors," and accused them, too, of being "in the pay of foreign masters." The desire for political change nevertheless had acquired a momentum that Moi was unable to halt, and he seemed unwilling even to try—as he might have done by making some minor concessions. The attacks on the multiparty advocates became more vicious. In June, a gang armed with automatic rifles, axes, and machetes raided Matiba's house. Matiba wasn't home, but the gang fractured his wife's skull and also injured his nineteen-year-old daughter. Government officials have sought to portray the break-in as a routine burglary attempt, but most Kenyans—and most foreign diplomats in Kenya—believe that the government was involved at some level. The raid was carried out by about fifteen men in their twenties and thirties who addressed one another by military rank, such as "corporal" and "sergeant." They acted with "paramilitary discipline," a Western diplomat told me. A few days after the raid, while Matiba and Rubia were meeting with their lawyer, Paul Muite, six plainclothes policemen raided Muite's office. The policemen declared that it was an "illegal meeting" and sought to arrest the two politicians, but when they got outside they found that a crowd had gathered, and they abandoned their mission. Three weeks later, however, the police picked up Matiba and Rubia, along with Imanyara and other lawyers and politicians thought to be associated with the call for a multiparty system.

THE rigor of the assaults, verbal and physical, on the multiparty proponents suggests that more is at stake than philosophical differences about the best political system for Kenya. And there is. Many of the proponents of one-party government are seeking to protect their political power, which involves access to enormous wealth. Nevertheless, if a referendum were held on a one-party versus a multiparty form of government it is by no means certain what the outcome would be. There are no public-opinion polls here, and any attempt to gauge the support for a multiparty system runs up against a serious problem: few people are likely to voice such support when doing so means being branded as traitors and subversives. But there is a great deal of support for the one-party system. Many Kenyans look at the poverty and turmoil elsewhere in Africa and then at the prosperity and peace that they have been enjoying, and are understandably happy to continue with the present form of government.

Kenyans believe that the reason they have prospered while the rest of the continent has declined is that their country has not been ruptured by tribalism. "We want peace," an office clerk said recently, in explaining to me why he was opposed to a multiparty system. "We don't want to be like Uganda." At the time of independence, in 1962, Uganda was ahead of Kenya in almost all social and economic categories. Its university was referred to as the Harvard of Africa; its health-care system was one of the best in the Third World; and its soil supported a bountiful agriculture. Today, Uganda is recovering from two decades of chaos, much of it caused by tribalism, and while Uganda, which tolerates more government criticism today than Kenya does, might surpass Kenya again in a generation, most Kenyans are persuaded by the reality of the past rather than by the uncertainty of the future.

Concerns about tribalism cannot be

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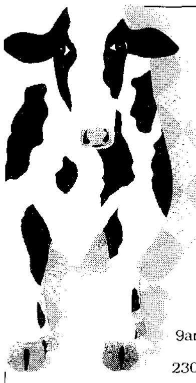

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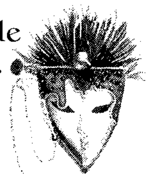

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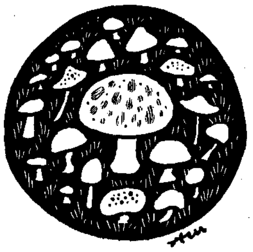
dismissed as nothing but the self-serving rationalizations of politicians. When the European powers divided up sub-Saharan Africa, at the end of the last century, they created nations to suit their own interests, giving virtually no thought to the people living in those nations. Ethnic groups that had different languages and often conflicting cultures were forced within the same new national boundaries; Zaire, for instance, contains more than two hundred ethnic groups, and the same is true of Nigeria and Cameroon. (During the colonial period, the ethnic groups were indiscriminately referred to as tribes, and that is how they are usually referred to still, even by most Africans.) The Europeans split up some tribes—the Masai, for example, are in both Tanzania and Kenya, while the Hutu and the Tutsi are in both Rwanda and Burundi—and put together in the same nation tribes that were enemies.



Since independence, tribalism has been a major deterrent to African economic and political development. The continent's seemingly perpetual wars are nearly always between tribes, not nations. In 1967, the Ibo of Nigeria rebelled against the central government and sought to establish Biafra as an independent nation; the ensuing civil war went on for three years and cost at least half a million lives. During the current war in Liberia, decapitated and mutilated corpses of civilians have appeared in Monrovia and in many villages, as paramilitary groups aligned with the Gio, Mano, and Krahn tribes exact revenge. In South Africa, in mid-August, historical tribal animosities erupted, and in a week almost four hundred people were killed in clashes between the Zulu, who back the Inkatha political movement, and the Xhosa, who support the African National Congress.

When Kenyans—particularly KANU politicians—talk about tribalism, it is not primarily because they fear chaos and anarchy. Rather, "tribalism" has become a code word, an acceptable way of expressing a specific fear of the Kikuyu, who are the country's largest tribe. While the Kikuyu fought with some tribes, such as the Masai, in precolonial times, they coexisted peacefully with many others. The current widespread resentment of the Kikuyu arose during the colonial era. Paradoxically, the Kikuyu both benefitted and suffered from the British presence. The British settled where the Kikuyu lived —in Nairobi and the surrounding highlands, which during the British era became known as the White Highlands. Not only does Nairobi, because it is near the equator and is also a mile high, have a pleasant climate the year round—never too hot or muggy, never very cold —but the highlands are the most fertile acreage in the country, which is why the British established their tea estates there. Living close to the British had advantages for the Kikuyu, however, as living near colonial settlements has had for certain other tribes throughout Africa. For the Kikuyu, it meant exposure to trade and commerce and other modern ways. Besides, the British—partly from a need to win the loyalty of the Kikuyu, partly from a sense of noblesse oblige, and partly because they were dependent on servants and workers who were at least semiliterate—made some special benefits, including education, available to them. The tribes farther from Nairobi enjoyed few, if any, of the benefits of colonial rule, and resented the Kikuyu.

Contact with the British also exposed the Kikuyu to concepts of freedom and independence. The conjunction of these notions and the Kikuyu's anger at having lost their lands to the British settlers resulted, in the early nineteen-fifties, in the Mau Mau rebellion. To quash the rebellion, the British recruited soldiers from other tribes, many of whom were only too happy to kill Kikuyu, and thus the animosities between the tribes were exacerbated. When the British rounded up and exiled or imprisoned the leaders of the Mau Mau movement, the leadership vacuum was filled by the Luo, a tribe from western Kenya. For centuries, the Luo, who lived on the western side of the Rift Valley, had had no contact with the Kikuyu, who lived east of the great divide, but when the British established Nairobi and other towns many Luo went east, in search of jobs and low-level government positions. This put them in contact and in competition with the Kikuyu. During the continuing struggle for independence, the Kikuyu and the Luo put aside their differences to fight against the common enemy. This was a pattern that recurred throughout Africa: tribes united to fight for freedom, and, once they had it, fought among themselves for power.

In 1960, when, in anticipation of independence, the British allowed the formation of political parties, the Kikuyu and the Luo formed the Kenya African National Union. Other tribes, fearing domination by those two, formed the Kenya African Democratic Union, or KADU. The principal KADU tribes were the Luhya and the Kalenjin, the country's second-largest and fifth-largest tribes, and they were joined by the Masai and several coastal tribes. Moi, a Kalenjin, was one of the KADU leaders. Less than a year after independence, KADU voluntarily dissolved itself, and its members joined KANU. That union was the beginning of one-party rule in Kenya, which has continued uninterrupted except for one three-year period. In 1966, the Kenya People's Union, or K.P.U., was formed by Oginga Odinga, who was then Jomo Kenyatta's Vice-President. It was intended to be not a tribal party but an ideologically based (leftist) one; still, Odinga was a Luo, and most of the K.P.U.'s supporters were Luo, so it was thought of as a Luo party. Odinga's withdrawal from KANU and the formation of the K.P.U. signalled the end of the Kikuyu-Luo marriage. The final break came with the assassination of Tom Mboya, who, although he was a Luo, was one of the country's staunchest nationalists. He was shot in July of 1969, in broad daylight, in downtown Nairobi, and the killing still reverberates through Kenyan politics. The assassin was a Kikuyu, and though his motive has remained obscure, Luos were convinced that the government was responsible. When Kenyatta, a Kikuyu, attended a memorial service for Mboya, Luos threw stones and shoes at his car, and a few months later, when he went to Kisumu, a Luo town on the edge of Lake Victoria, violence erupted, and several people were killed. Kenyatta banned the K.P.U. and had its leaders put in jail, where they remained for several years without trial. The banning of the K.P.U. effectively marked the end of multiparty politics in Kenya.

Kenyatta preached nationalism, and is credited with giving the country's tribes a sense of nationhood. But his efforts in that respect were marred by the favoritism he showed the Kikuyu. "Kenyatta

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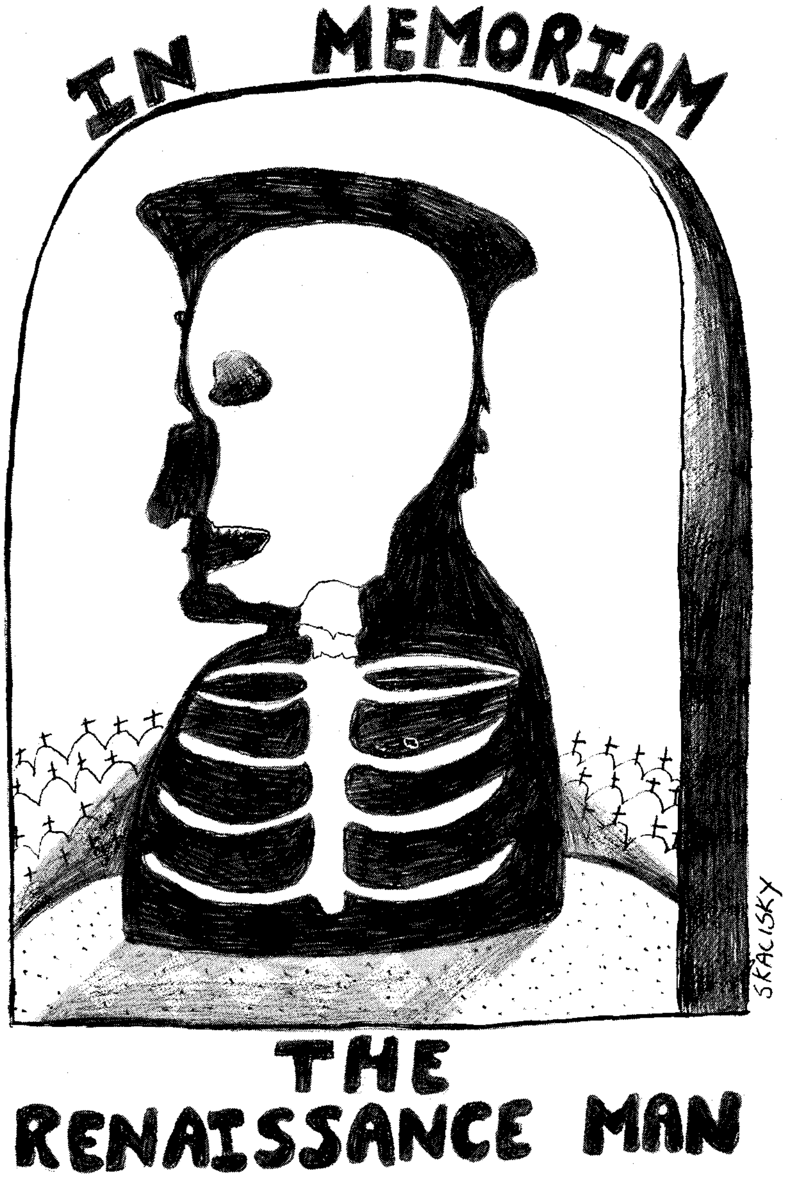
ran this country as if no other tribe mattered even a little bit," Hilary Ng'weno, the editor of *The Weekly Review*, told me recently. Ng'weno is not a Kikuyu—he is a member of the Samia, a small subtribe of the Luhya, in western Kenya—and his assessment may reflect tribal rivalries, but it would nonetheless be difficult to find a non-Kikuyu who doesn't agree with this. During Kenyatta's Presidency, the Kikuyu dominated all sectors of Kenyan life. They held the most important Cabinet posts, such as Finance and Foreign Affairs, and controlled the civil service. At Nairobi University, the country's only university at the time, more than half the professors were Luo or Luhya, but almost all the administrators, appointed by the government, were Kikuyu. (The stereotypes offered by many Kenyans classify the Luo and the Luhya as the country's intellectuals—professors, lawyers, doctors—and the Kikuyu as the entrepreneurs.) The Kikuyu domination may have been due in part to their superior qualifications. "The Kikuyus are the most educated, experienced, resourceful, energetic, adaptable, and modern tribe in Kenya," Stanley Meisler, the Los Angeles *Times* correspondent in Nairobi, wrote in *Foreign Affairs* in 1970. Justified or not, the domination was resented by non-Kikuyu Kenyans.



When Kenyatta, who was thought to be about ninety, died, in 1978, the law required an election within ninety days. The Kikuyu themselves were split between two powerful rivals from their own tribe, so they gave their backing to the Kalenjin Vice-President Moi, who became the KANU candidate and thus ran unopposed. Moi's Vice-President was a Kikuyu, and the Kikuyus expected to return to power in the next election, if not sooner. But the anti-Kikuyu sentiment in the country was stronger than they realized, Ng'weno told me, and the Luo gave Moi their backing once they realized that if the Kikuyu returned to power the Luos "would be out in the wilderness for another ten years." In 1982, Moi, who was a schoolteacher before turning to politics, rammed through Parliament the constitutional amendment that made KANU the country's only legal party. Since Moi consolidated his power, it has been the Kalenjins' turn to enjoy the spoils. Because the economy is so small, this leaves most other tribes with little but resentment.

Whether a multiparty system would break down along tribal lines is, of course, impossible to say until it is tried. Tribalism is certainly not as pervasive in Kenya today as it was twenty years ago, or even ten. Urbanization has undoubtedly done much to loosen tribal bonds by bringing people from different tribes into daily contact. The country's Foreign Minister, W. N. Ayah, who is a member of the Luo tribe, noted recently that in western Kenya, where he grew up, he didn't meet a non-Luo until he was in secondary school; his son, born in Nairobi, met a non-Luo at his baptism, he said. Ayah's observation suggests that younger Kenyans may not have the same tribal feelings as the older generation, which controls the political system. This idea was reinforced for me in a conversation with a sixty-two-year-old businessman and politician, a member of the Kamba tribe, which supplied most of the Army personnel during the colonial period. He is a staunch defender of the one-party system. "I sincerely believe that a multiparty system would run predominantly along tribal lines," he said. He then told me, however, that he had three sons, aged thirty, twenty-nine, and twenty-eight, and said, "They have as many friends from other tribes as Akamba. They consider themselves not Akamba but Kenyans."

But if tribalism may be fading it still exists. I asked a banker in his thirties if he was a Kikuyu. Yes, he said, but he really didn't think about it—he considered himself "cosmopolitan." Then I asked whether he thought the parties in a multiparty system would form along tribal lines, and he said, "I think so." At the other end of the educational and economic spectrum, a Luo cook in a white household told me, "We would never vote for a Kikuyu—never." It is hard to find a Kenyan who, unless he is a partisan of the multiparty system, does not think that such a system would break down along tribal lines—at least initially. Advocates of a multiparty system argue, though, that because the Kikuyu constitute only twenty-one per cent of the population and each of the next four largest tribes has eleven to fourteen per cent the Kikuyu would have to form coalitions and appeal to other tribes for support.

IN defending his country's single-party system, President Moi has said that Kenya has the best democracy in Africa—and indeed, measured against the rest of the African continent, with its plethora of repressive, dictatorial governments, Kenya is impressive. But while Kenya is not a police state, there has been a steady erosion of democratic institutions in recent years. In 1986, the constitution was amended to take away life tenure for the attorney general, and two years later life tenure was also taken away from senior judges; these officials now serve at the will of the President. As for the press, three magazines—*Beyond*, published by the National Christian Council of Kenya, *The Financial Review*, and *Development Agenda*—have been banned in the past three years, and government officials often call upon the newspapers to block stories. One subject that the newspapers never investigate, therefore, is corruption among Cabinet Ministers and senior KANU politicians. (In Uganda, even the government newspaper, *New Vision*, has named corrupt government officials.) It may be unfair, as many Kenyans insist that it is, to judge Kenya by the standards of American democracy, and even Moi has said that Kenya will become a multiparty democracy after the country has developed further. But when the government assaults the press and the judiciary it is crippling institutions that are necessary for a democracy to function.

In theory, it might be possible for a one-party state to be a democracy; that could happen if there were ways for citizens to express their will and to hold government officials accountable. Moi and KANU, however, have failed to translate the possibility into reality. It is not just that the press and the judiciary have been hobbled. The availability of differing views within KANU has been eliminated by repeated purges of members who do not follow the Party line. In a pastoral letter in June, Kenya's Catholic bishops expressed alarm about the "unlimited authority" that had been given to KANU. Dissent from the Party's views, they said, was often considered subversive and a threat to national security. Then, after referring to the situation that existed in Latin America in the late nineteen-seventies, they expressed concern that the situation in Kenya might lead to "political murders, unlawful home searches, arbitrary detentions, confessions under torture and death squads' actions."

One more sign that the country has been headed in the wrong direction politically is the partial loss of the secret ballot. In 1986, the secret ballot was replaced in primary elections by queuing. Voters stand behind the pictures of the candidate of their choice and are counted, and the three top vote-getters advance to the general election—where the secret ballot is still used. If any candidate receives more than seventy per cent of the vote in the primary, however, he is automatically elected. In the past, elections in Kenya were remarkable for the number of incumbents defeated—sometimes more than half of them. But in the 1988 election—the first to which queuing and the seventy-per-cent rule were applied—three-quarters of the members of Parliament retained their seats.

Queuing has also reduced voter turnout. An office manager who is in her forties told me recently that she was proud of her voting card, which showed that she had voted in every election since independence. But she didn't vote in the last election, she said, and would not vote as long as queuing existed. This woman is a firm supporter of the one-party system. "I have seen the colonial government. I have seen the Kenyatta government. And I have seen this last one," she said. She supports the Moi government, primarily because of the country's economic development in the past decade. "Life in general has really improved," she said. Also, she is a Luo, and is convinced that a multiparty system would again lead to Kikuyu dominance. She is just as firmly convinced, however, that there must be some change. "Multiparty is not the answer, but the government must be able to have a dialogue," she said. "It's the rigidity that is wrong. The majority of Kenyans want change."

If one word can describe what the Kenyans seem to want—even those who favor the one-party system—that

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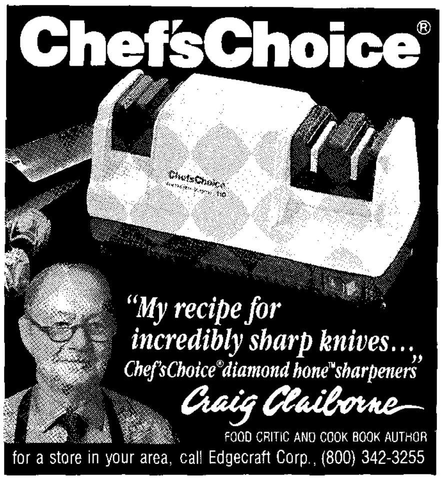
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is it: "change." Referring to the three days of rioting in July, the young banker I spoke with said, "They're not looking for a multiparty system. They're looking for fundamental change. The only outlet at the moment is the multiparty debate." Even Philip Ochieng, who is the editor of KANU's *Times*, recognizes the popular dissatisfaction with the current political situation. "The issue to most Kenyans is not multiparty or single-party," he told me in July. "The issue is that the one party should be widened in scope—liberalized, if you will. Because it has gone bad. There are too many individuals in leadership who don't discuss issues; they just hurl abuse. There has not been enough accountability."

At the end of July, a KANU committee, appointed by Moi, began hearings around the country on what political changes the people wanted, and it is supposed to issue its report at the end of August. It is widely believed that the committee will recommend the elimination of queuing and the seventy-percent rule and will declare that a KANU member cannot be expelled for his dissenting views. Those changes would only return Kenya to where it was politically a few years ago, and would leave in place the one-party system and a lack of tenure for judges. Those minimal changes might have satisfied most Kenyans if they had been announced in April of this year, but the debate and political discussion, which Kenyans say have been the most intense in many years, have led them to want more democracy and to believe they can have it. "Kenyans want democratic institutions," a prominent University of Nairobi political-science professor told me in mid-August. "And they want the President and political leaders to be accountable to those institutions."

ON July 4th, the government began rounding up the leaders of the multiparty movement. The first to be arrested were Matiba and Rubia, at six o'clock that evening. Only four hours earlier, Rubia had been a guest at an American Independence Day celebration at the residence of Ambassador Hempstone. Among the other guests were Gitobu Imanyara, the editor of *The Nairobi Law Monthly*, and Gibson Kamau Kuria, the winner of the Kennedy Human Rights Award. That Ambassador Hempstone had invited Rubia, Imanyara, and Kuria (and Matiba, who was unable to attend) was noteworthy, because in authoritarian countries that are America's allies American diplomats tend to shun dissidents (as Herman Cohen, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, later did, when he went to Kenya in early August). The American Embassy provided even more support for Kuria, who went into hiding on July 6th, after he heard that he was about to be arrested. On the morning of July 7th, he walked into the Embassy, and within a few days the Kenyan government allowed him to leave for the United States, where he is to be a visiting scholar at the Harvard Law School. Gitobu Imanyara wasn't so fortunate. After following him to school when he picked up his two sons, ages twelve and ten, the police kept his house under surveillance, and picked him up late in the evening of July 5th. He was held in prison for three weeks—some of the time in the psychiatric section, which, he told me, was filthy—without being formally accused of any crime or misdemeanor, and then he was brought into court and charged with seditious publication. The publication in question was a recent issue of *The Nairobi Law Monthly*, which had on the cover, in white letters on a green background, "The Historic Debate," and a question mark between a box with two fingers and a box with one. In addition to arguments by advocates of the multiparty system, the issue contained articles against it, including an interview with Vice-President George Saitoti and excerpts from President Moi's speeches. The original print run was ten thousand, which was the highest ever for the magazine, but it quickly sold out, and five thousand more copies were printed and distributed.

As of mid-August, Matiba and Rubia were still being held without charges. Matiba was forced to sleep on a cement floor, with only one blanket, according to his lawyer, Paul Muite. Muite said that he had not been allowed to see Rubia. Also being held without charges was Raila Odinga, a son of the former Vice-President, who had been detained without charges for four years after the 1982 coup attempt. He was arrested this time after he had met with Matiba and Rubia, in an effort by the latter to bring Luos into the movement. In late July, the senior Odinga, who had stayed out of the debate publicly, sent a six-page letter to

President Moi, calling for a multiparty system, a limit on Presidential tenure to two four-year terms, the immediate dissolution of Parliament, and the release of all political prisoners. Odinga sent copies of his letter to the newspapers, but the government instructed the newspapers not to make any mention of it and the papers obeyed. Imanyara intended to print the letter in the issue of *The Nairobi Law Monthly* that was scheduled to go on sale in late August.

In response to the arrests, the American State Department issued a statement declaring that it was "distressed," and added, "We believe very strongly in the principle of public expression of dissent and the right of peaceful assembly, and that these rights, both principal tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should be integral parts of all political systems." In the annals of Washington's reactions to repression and to arrests of dissidents by leaders of America's allies—and Kenya is probably America's strongest ally in sub-Saharan Africa—this statement stands out: the Shah, Somoza, Marcos, and a long list of other dictators didn't receive such public rebukes, and Moi is a paradigm of democracy compared with them. It is also hard to imagine the issuance of such a statement in Kenya a year ago, before the ending of the Cold War.

WITHIN the State Department, a debate about what the American policy toward democracy in Africa should be began last December, when Donald K. Petterson, the American Ambassador in Tanzania at the time, sent a confidential cable to Washington. He noted that the United States had pushed for democracy in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and other parts of the world, but that when it came to Africa "we have not made much of the scarcity of democratic governments." American policy in Africa had been tied closely to the geopolitical competition with the Soviet Union and China, he said. "Now, however, with the passing of the Cold War, our need for Africa diminishes." Consequently, he said, the United States should adopt a policy that "more explicitly and broadly ties developmental aid to political reforms in Africa." Assistant Secretary Herman Cohen concurred in general with Petterson's views, and in April, in a speech at a conference in Washington on the

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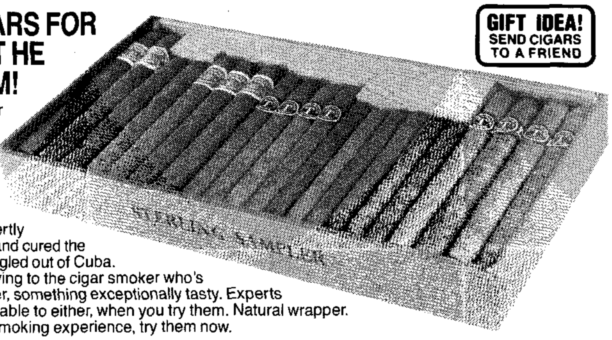

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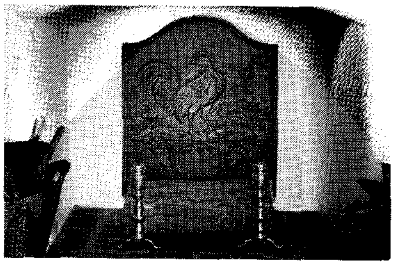

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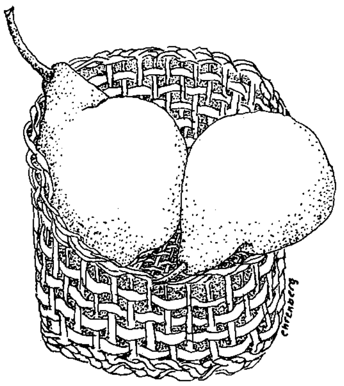
finance-and-development crisis that plagues Africa, Cohen publicly articulated the broad outlines of American policy in Africa. The United States government had had "a change in attitude toward the African one-party state," he told his audience, and he added, pointedly, that it was time for most African political systems "to evolve toward Western-style democracy." Political reform was necessary for economic growth and development, he said. Here he was reciting what has become the view of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other providers of aid—that free-market economies are essential for economic growth, and free-market economies require democratic political systems. Last year, in a report titled "Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth," the World Bank placed much of the blame for Africa's poverty, debt, and lack of economic growth on bad government. It was imperative, the report said, that African governments crack down on corruption, strengthen accountability, encourage public debate, and nurture a free press.



The policy of linking financial aid to political reform is putting considerable pressure on African governments. Yet there is evidence that the relation between political systems and economic growth is far more complex than the idea that democracy automatically equals development. Chile's economic growth during the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet surpassed that of many Latin-American countries with democratically elected governments. South Korea is an even more striking example of growth under dictatorship. Democracy can actually hinder growth in a weak and underdeveloped economy. Workers, peasants, and students will make demands, often in street demonstrations, and the politicians will be under pressure to respond. Scarce capital that is needed for investment and infrastructure may be used instead to satisfy those demands. What is needed for economic development in much of the underdeveloped world is "enlightened leadership with a semi-authoritarian system," says an official with the United States Agency for International Development, a nineteen-sixties liberal who has spent most of his career in the Third World. The examples of Singapore under Lee Kuan Yew and Indonesia under Suharto seem to support his judgment, however difficult such ideas may be for many people to accept. Unfortunately, in Africa there has been a lot of authoritarianism but little enlightened leadership.

Ambassador Hempstone didn't wholly agree with Petterson's views on multiparty democracy in Africa. "I yield to no one in my support for political pluralism and democracy, but you have to look at African history. Africa has missed a few things, like the Industrial Revolution, the Enlightenment, the Reformation, the French Revolution," Hempstone told me, summarizing his own views as he had delivered them in Washington in April, during a meeting of American Ambassadors to African countries. He went on, "The whole thrust of what I had to say was that the multiparty system will not necessarily lead to Jeffersonian democracy, and the one-party system need not necessarily lead to repression and a lack of political freedom. I found myself defending Kenya, explaining Moi and the single-party government."

Whatever Hempstone's private views may be, he has followed American policy—too bluntly for many Kenyans. His first opportunity to speak out came last April, very soon after he returned from the meeting in Washington, during a routine visit to Mombasa, where the United States has a consular office. While the Ambassador was there, he paid a courtesy call on Shariff Nassir, the chairman of Mombasa's KANU branch, who is one of the most strident defenders of the one-party system. Nassir, who had read reports of Assistant Secretary Cohen's speech linking aid to democratic reforms, told the Ambassador that America should not "meddle" in Kenya's political activities. "Leave us alone to shape the future of our country the way we want," Nassir said. Ambassador Hempstone told me afterward that he had responded in rather strong terms: "I pointed out what was going on around the world, and the swing toward democracy, and that I thought Kenya ought to be a part of that swing."

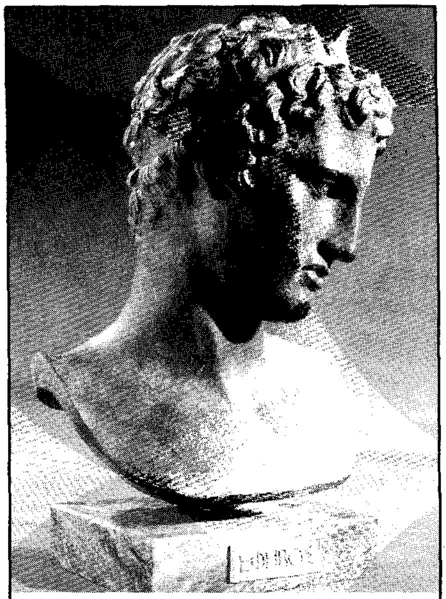
A few days later, Hempstone weighed in again on behalf of political reform in Kenya. This time, it was in the speech he made to the Rotary Club in Nairobi. The speech, which was written by the Embassy's economic officer, focussed principally on trade and investment, but Hempstone added some further thoughts. "I would be derelict in my responsibility to the business community and the government of Kenya if I did not tell you a strong political tide is flowing in our Congress to concentrate our economic assistance on those of the world's nations that nourish democratic institutions, defend human rights, and practice multiparty politics," he said at the end of the speech. Hempstone's remarks might have gone unnoticed if they had not been made on the day that Matiba and Rubia issued their first call for political reform, and if the *Nation* had not played the two stories jointly on the front page—as clear an expression of that paper's editorial position as it could make without getting closed down.

Hempstone's insertion of himself and the American government into Kenya's political affairs came as a surprise—countries are not supposed to intervene in another country's internal politics and in general diplomats view their mission as avoiding confrontations and not creating them. Nearly all the other American Ambassadors in Africa have been silent about the continent's lack of democracy, even though most of them are posted to countries whose governments are far more repressive than Kenya's. What makes Hempstone's actions even more notable is that he is, as he says, "probably the most conservative Ambassador in Africa." The ending of the Cold War provides one explanation for Ambassador Hempstone's outspokenness on behalf of greater democracy. His personality and the fact that he is not a career diplomat offer other insights. Hempstone is a journalist who was in Africa for nearly eight years in the late nineteen-fifties and early sixties, and when George Bush was elected President, Hempstone, who had resigned as editor-in-chief of the Washington *Times* in 1985, unabashedly sought to become the Ambassador in Kenya. Since arriving, last November, Hempstone has routinely departed from conventional diplomatic ways. During a background briefing for reporters on the patio of the Ambassador's residence in August, for example, Assistant Secretary Cohen was attired in dark slacks and white shirt and tie, while the Ambassador, who is a heavyset man with a white beard, wore shorts, a cotton shirt, a windbreaker, and tennis shoes. Hempstone not only makes himself readily available to reporters but is almost always willing to speak on the record—another rarity for diplomats. When the State Department notified all Ambassadors, in June, that requests for interviews had to be cleared in advance with the Public Affairs Bureau Office of Press Relations in Washington, known as PA/PRS, Hempstone objected. In a cable that must have startled the State Department bureaucrats, the Ambassador, who seems to delight in mischief-making, claimed that the restriction, "by someone named PA/PRS," reduced Ambassadors to "potted palms." Under the Department's edict, Ambassadors were expected to act like children and "raise their hands and ask Mommy's permission." Hempstone went on, "Mommy's name is PA/PRS."

President Moi was angered by Hempstone's involvement in the multiparty debate. "Kenya is a sovereign state and equal to other states and does not require any guidance from outsiders on how to run its affairs," Moi said during a rally in western Kenya the day after Hempstone's Rotary Club speech. Other Kenyan politicians dutifully chimed in. "We will not tolerate treasonable activities by Americans living in Kenya," said Elijah Mwangale, who was then the Minister for Livestock Development, and he added that he had information that Kenyan dissidents were receiving large sums of money through the American Ambassador. (The information has never been confirmed.) That remark gave Hempstone another opportunity to speak his mind. After emphatically denying the charge, he told a New York *Times* reporter, "It is well known that if anyone knows about illegal money, he knows about it." The Ambassador declined to be more specific, but, according to other diplomats, Mwangale was one of two Cabinet Ministers who made a considerable amount of money from importing sugar a few years ago after Kenya experienced a shortage of its own sugar.

In his observation about Mwangale, Ambassador Hempstone had touched on a topic to which Kenyan officials are even more sensitive than they are to the subject of human rights—corruption in high places. The Catholic bishops said in their pastoral letter that corruption had "reached alarming proportions" and that it was "destroying the moral fibre of the nation." Corruption starts at the top. Cabinet Ministers have gathered enormous sums from their positions, and thus live in large homes in fashionable neighborhoods, which they could never afford on their government salaries, and they drive Mercedes-Benzes that they have brought into the country duty-free. Corruption is not just a moral issue. According to Western diplomats, graft and corruption in the Kenyan grain industry add twenty-five million dollars a year to what consumers pay for grain products. And an international banker here told me that one reason foreign investment had declined steadily for the past three years (American investment is particularly low, although that by Japanese companies is growing slightly) is corruption, which makes the cost of doing business too high. He also blamed the bureaucracy for impeding investment; more than forty licenses are needed to begin operating in Kenya's export-processing zone, he said, though it was established specifically to attract foreign investment. There is a link between bureaucracy and corruption: each license means one more person who can extract money. A broader explanation for the corruption, especially at the higher levels, is that in a modest economy politics provides more certain access to wealth than business does. This is a major reason that efforts by the World Bank and other donors to get African governments to reduce the size of their role in business meets such resistance. It is also why those in power do not want to open up the system—it would mean allowing others to have a chance at that power, and the money that goes with it—or to relax controls on the press and on speech, and thus risk being exposed.

IN pushing for democratic changes in Kenya, the United States has been conspicuously alone most of the time. "There are eighty-four embassies



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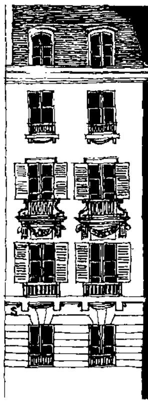

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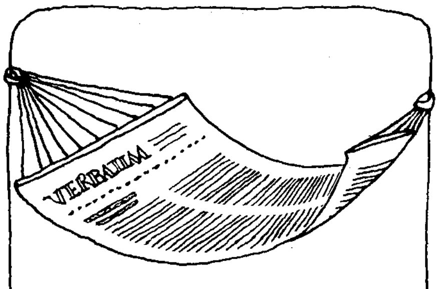

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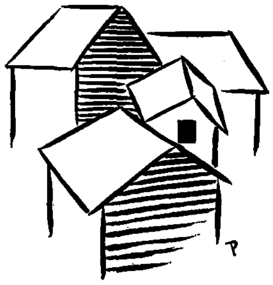
here, and it would be nice if we had a little help," an American diplomat told me in late June. Not until mid-July—ten weeks after Hempstone made his Rotary Club speech, a month after Matiba's house was broken into, and a week after the arrests of the political dissidents—did any of the other governments register any public concern about developments. It was the Scandinavian countries, led by the Danish Ambassador in Nairobi, Erik Fiil, that did so. Fiil made an appeal for the release of the political prisoners, and said that he found it "regrettable that Kenyan authorities have resorted to brute force in order to avoid a free exchange of views on the democratic development of the country."



In June, at a meeting of French officials and heads of former French colonies, President François Mitterrand had said that France was prepared to continue helping African countries escape from poverty, debt, and underdevelopment, but that "France will link its contribution to efforts designed to lead to greater liberty and democracy." Nevertheless, although the effort in Kenya has been toward less freedom and democracy, the French have said nothing publicly about the situation there. Nor have the Germans or the Japanese, and they provide more development aid to Kenya than the United States does. The silence of Kenya's major donors has registered. When I asked Philip Ochieng, of the *Times*, if the Kenyan government was concerned about moves in the United States Congress to cut aid to Kenya, he said not really. The Germans, the Italians, the British, the French, and the Japanese would increase their aid to compensate, he declared confidently. He might have added Belgium, which in late July announced roughly seven million dollars in new aid.

Because of historical ties, Britain's influence in Kenya is greater than America's. In early June, the British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, in a speech to the Overseas Development Institute, in London, addressed the formidable economic and development problems facing Africa, and the role that foreign donors can play. Countries giving aid should favor countries that practice political pluralism and respect the rule of law and human rights, he said. "Governments which persist with repressive policies, corrupt management, wasteful discredited economic systems should not expect us to support their folly with scarce aid resources which could be used better elsewhere." Yet, although the trend in Kenya was away from pluralism, and respect for the rule of law was deteriorating, the British government said nothing publicly, and, according to some diplomats here, even in private meetings with President Moi the British High Commissioner in Kenya made only very mild remonstrances. After the arrests of Matiba, Rubia, and the others, the British Embassy in Nairobi had "no comment." It wasn't until nearly two weeks later that the British Foreign Office in London was reported to have called in the Kenyan High Commissioner to privately express anxiety about the situation and urge the release of the political prisoners. At almost the same time, however, Britain announced that it was planning to increase aid to Kenya.

Ambassador Hempstone's conduct earned him praise from many Kenyans. The managing director of a major Kenyan company, a Luo in his fifties, told me in July that he thought Ambassador Hempstone was doing "a fantastic job." It was necessary for the American Ambassador to speak out, he said, "because Moi won't listen to our people." He added, "If Moi overcomes this one, he'll thank Hempstone." The praise was quiet, but the condemnations by Kenyan political leaders, who accused Hempstone of interfering in the country's domestic affairs, were loud and shrill. "Shut up, Mr Ambassador," the *Times* demanded in a front-page editorial. In this and other editorials Ochieng also accused the Ambassador of being a "holier-than-thou moralist," of "arrogance," and of exhibiting an "extreme poverty of tact and diplomacy."

It wasn't the fact that the United States was meddling in Kenya's politics or the Ambassador's style which was the gravamen of the complaints by Kenyan officials. What really bothered them was the substance of the American meddling, as was made plain, for example, when Nelson Mandela stopped in Nairobi on the way home after his six-week tour of Europe and the United States. Instead of standing up as an advocate for democracy, Mandela lay down with Moi and the ruling party. "We are not keen to be involved in the internal affairs of any country," he said at a press conference. "It is for the people of Kenya to decide their own affairs." That was in stark contrast, of course, with Mandela's plea for the world to get involved in South Africa's internal affairs through sanctions against the white government and support for the African National Congress.

Though the reactions of the Kenyans to the United States intervention may be disingenuous and self-serving, the form of the intervention does give rise to troublesome questions about how the United States, and the Western world at large, can, or should, go about promoting democracy. "He's not sensitive to the anti-colonial feelings in Africa," Hilary Ng'weno said about Hempstone—a view that is widely shared. This view is understandable and compelling, given the history of Africans' being ruled by white Westerners. Other observers feared that the "public spanking"—a World Bank official's term for America's conduct—may have achieved the opposite of what was intended. It may have caused some Kenyans to stiffen their resistance to change, in order to assert the country's pride and independence, especially when those were being challenged, as they saw it, by whites. The Ambassador, instead of expressing American concern publicly, could have practiced quiet diplomacy. But that has been the approach of the United States and other Western countries in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa for many years, and it is obvious that the approach has not worked.

The United States still has not decided exactly how hard it should push for democracy, and Hempstone's approach to diplomacy is troubling to many in the State Department. That was apparent at the time of Assistant Secretary Cohen's four-day visit to Kenya in early August. The purpose of his mission was to try to patch up American-Kenyan relations, which had clearly been frayed by Hempstone's assertiveness. Cohen said that the message he wanted to deliver was that there was need for political reform in Kenya, but in order not to upset the Moi government he did not meet officially with any of the Kenyan politicians, lawyers, or church leaders who have been calling for such reform. Paul Muite, the lawyer for Matiba and Rubia, and himself an advocate of a multiparty system, made several requests to the American Embassy for a meeting with Cohen, but he was told that the Assistant Secretary was too busy. Cohen's visit was a "disappointment," the University of Nairobi political-science professor told me. After the Department's statement following the arrests and after all that Ambassador Hempstone had been doing, the Kenyan advocates of greater democracy had been expecting more from Cohen. The message that Cohen delivered by being seen with Moi and other government officials and shunning the dissenters, the professor said, was that the United States was satisfied with the status quo.

Ultimately, the issue is broader than how the United States conducts its foreign policy. The fundamental issue is what duty the United States has to promote democracy in the world—what duty and what right. These are not new questions. They have been considered since Thomas Jefferson was America's first Secretary of State, and advocated that we advance democracy by example, not by imposition. But that was before the American Century. During the Cold War, the answer for many was easy—our security interests before someone else's democracy. Now, with the Cold War ending, and in the aftermath of the tremendous democratic changes in Europe and, before that, in Southeast Asia and Latin America, it is in Africa, in countries like Kenya, that the question of democracy in developing nations and the role of democratic countries in advancing democracy elsewhere must be pondered and answered.

—RAYMOND BONNER

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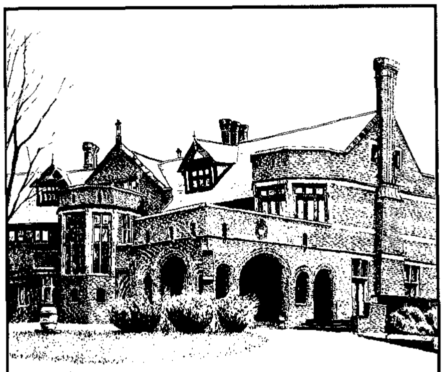

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BOOKS

Elmore Leonard in Hollywood

BOOK by book (he publishes almost one a year), the tireless and ingenious genre novelist Elmore Leonard is painting an intimate, precise, funny, frightening, and irresistible mural of the American underworld. This mural is peopled with thieves, embezzlers, kidnappers, loan sharks, drug dealers, rapists, and killers, but there is no camp in it and no caricature. Leonard, laughing just loud enough to let us know that he has everything in perspective, slowly reveals his characters as the fools and clowns they are; inevitably, they go too far and are destroyed. This usually happens somewhere near the end of his books, and before it does we hear, see, and even smell these people. Leonard treats them with the understanding and the detailed attention that Jane Austen gives her Darcys and Emma Woodhouses. They have heritages and pedigrees. We learn where they came from and how they think and communicate—occasionally on a frequency we can barely understand. We learn how, for instance, a man graduates with a master's in business administration from the University of Michigan, teaches accounting, is fired for running a part-time abortion service (ten per cent of the fee), embezzles from a chain of dress shops, and, slipping gradually sidewise, ends up seven years after his graduation as a blackmailer and killer. But Leonard never lectures or preaches or points a finger at his figures or at society; evil suborns evil in his books, then self-destructs. At the center of this turbulence are his wondrous heroes, who survive, no matter how badly scarred. The heroes include ex-cons, a California melon grower, a Miami cop, the owner of a Detroit machine-tool company, the wife of an ironworker, an ex-marine and Pompano Beach-motel owner, an ex-Secret Service agent turned Walker Evans-type photographer, and, in his newest book, "Get Shorty" (Delacorte; $18.95), a reformed loan shark who works his way into the movie business.

"Get Shorty" is not red-tomato Leonard. Its plot within a plot—the loan shark, Chili Palmer, uses the story we are reading as his first script idea—moves at a surprisingly slow speed, and there is little of the tension that made "Killshot" and "Glitz" almost unbearable. The best thing to do when Leonard falters—he did recently in "Bandits" and "Freaky Deaky," too—is to reread "Mr. Majestyk," or "LaBrava," or "The Hunted," or even one of the lesser-known Leonards, such as the marvellous "52 Pick-Up," first published in 1974 and now available in paperback. It tells how the middle-aged owner of a machine-tool shop, Harry Mitchell, is blackmailed by three men: the Michigan-business-school graduate, a fat alcoholic who runs a "modelling" agency, and a drug addict and thief. (One afternoon, as a lark, the thief and his girl, who is got up in a blond wig and dark glasses, hijack a Detroit Gray Line sightseeing bus, strip the thirty-six passengers of their money and jewelry, and net over four thousand dollars.) Mitchell, a Second World War ace, is an honorable, conscientious gent with an attractive wife and two children, but he has taken up with a girl just a year older than his daughter. She turns out to be working with the blackmailers, who repeatedly film Mitchell and the girl. They show Mitchell the films and demand a hundred and five thousand dollars. Then they kill the girl, using Mitchell's licensed .38 Smith & Wesson, which they have stolen from his house. Mitchell refuses to buckle; slowly piecing things together, he figures out who the blackmailers are and begins closing in on *them*. The addict shoots the alcoholic, and the Michigan graduate shoots the addict and is then blown up by Mitchell in a stolen truck in which he expects to pick up the fifty-two-thousand-dollar payment Mitchell has promised him. Along the way, Leonard gives us the credo by which his heroes live: Mitchell "felt his confidence coming back and, with it, the beginning of an urge to get up and do something. That was the essence of the good feeling: to be able to remain calm and relax while he was keyed up and confident. Never panic. Never run. Face whatever had to be faced. Be practical, reasonable, up to a point. And if reason

"I've had eye contact with women before, Marcia—but never like this."

doesn't work, get up and kick it in the teeth."

Leonard did not get his due until the early eighties, after he had published twenty books. (The earliest are creditable Westerns, written mostly in the fifties and sixties, and already full of recognizable Leonard figures.) He has a brilliant ear—he is as good as George Higgins was in his first books, and makes Chandler and Cain sound Victorian—and his prose, which is often a curious echo of his dialogue, is wasteless and limber. He is a master of narrative (he can make a story walk or run at will), and his plots are as intricate as Wilkie Collins'. He is a poet of the vernacular, who almost never uses metaphors or similes. When he does, it's a beauty: "Chili's gaze moved from Ronnie the fool to Bo Catlett the dude, the man composed, elbows on the chair arms, his fingertips touching to form a tan-skinned church, a ruby ring for a stained-glass window." Leonard takes great care with his locales—among them are Detroit, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Atlantic City, and Florida. He is particularly good on the east coast of Florida, and that strange, spooky city Miami jumps off the page. So do his throwaway social bits. This one is from "Cat Chaser" (1982): "Jerry was a retired insurance salesman, sixty-seven, who cocked his golf cap to one side, slapped his broken blood vessels with Old Spice and went after lonely widows who'd invite him up to their condominiums for dinner, happy to cook for somebody again, have some fun."

Leonard's strongest books make you stand up and sit down a lot during their tight moments, but "Get Shorty," despite its occasional white-knuckle passages, belongs to that vast vinegary canon known as the Hollywood novel. There is a crafty, movie-wise Roger Corman producer named Harry Zimm, whose reputation rests on pictures called "Slime Creatures" and "Grotesque, Part Two." There is a sharp, tough, needling female big-studio producer and an equally sharp retired actress, who became famous for her screams in Harry's pictures. Best of all is the portrait Leonard gives us of a seven-million-dollar-a-picture star named Michael Weir. (Leonard's names are perfect. They make the characters they are attached to reverberate in just the right way.) Weir is a fine actor, a De Niro or a William Hurt, but he's spoiled, indecisive, and empty-headed. He is having dinner in a Hollywood restaurant with Harry and Chili Palmer:

> Then Michael had to look at the menu for a while, Harry willing to bet anything he wouldn't order from it. It was an unwritten rule in Hollywood, actors never ordered straight from the menu; they'd think of something they had to have that wasn't on it, or they'd tell exactly how they wanted the entrée prepared, the way their mother back in Queens used to fix it. The seven-million-dollar actor in the jacket a bum wouldn't wear told the headwaiter he felt like an omelet, hesitant about it, almost apologetic. Could he have a cheese omelet with shallots, but with the shallots only slightly browned? The headwaiter said yes, of course. Then could he have some kind of light tomato sauce over it with just a hint of garlic but, please, no oregano? Of course. And fresh peas in the tomato sauce? Harry wanted to tell him, Michael, you can have any fucking thing you want. You want boiled goat? They'll send out for it if they don't have one. Jesus, what you had to go through with actors. The ideal situation would be if you could make movies without them.

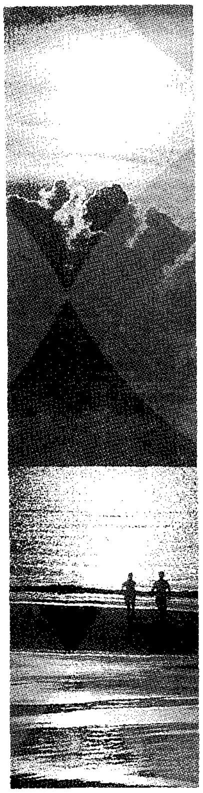
Leonard likes little inside jokes. When Chili Palmer first meets the smooth, deadly black dude Bo Catlett, he asks him if he is related to the great swing drummer Sid Catlett. Bo, looking dreamy, says, "Big Sid, huh? No, I'm from another tribe." Chances are that Bo, born around the time of Catlett's death, in 1951, would never have heard of him. Leonard wants us to know that *he* has, though.

—WHITNEY BALLIETT

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

SEVENTH HEAVEN, by Alice Hoffman (Putnam; $19.95). Ms. Hoffman is a dreamy and mesmerizing storyteller, and in this novel, her eighth, she brings her own brand of magic realism to the suburbs of Long Island. In 1959, when Nora Silk moves her family into a neighborhood of first-generation homeowners, she knows better than to tell people she's divorced. But she carries her own groceries and mows her own lawn, and it doesn't take long for the housewives on Hemlock Street to figure out the truth, and to punish her for it. Nora makes matters worse by feeding her kids junk food and wearing high heels to PTA meetings; soon her son is so bullied at school that he starts reading up on Houdini so that he can learn how to disappear. Nora's neighbors, however, have problems of their own: the new



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police detective can't sleep; a local hood is seeing visions; a housewife feels as though she'd been swallowing stones. And, on a cold, white New Year's Eve, the stars over Hemlock Street "formed a constellation no one had ever seen before, like the spine of a dinosaur arching above the rooftops, brilliant and terrifying." Before you know it, you're half in love with the ordinary people who inhabit this book; you're seduced by their susceptibility to the remarkable.

GENERAL

Memoirs, by Andrei Sakharov, translated from the Russian by Richard Lourie (Knopf; $29.95). In a transparent translation, the Soviet scientist who became a hero of the struggle for human rights recalls his life during the turmoil and terror of modern Russian history. Sakharov, who died last year, was born in 1921. Cousins and uncles were killed by Stalin, but his parents prudently refrained from discussing politics, and he "was content to absorb Communist ideology without questioning it." Besides, he was obsessed by science. Sakharov tells of the mixture of patriotism and scientific curiosity which inspired his work on the hydrogen bomb, and of his dismay when, after calling attention to the dangers of atmospheric testing, he discovered that despite the honors he had received his country's rulers regarded him as a talented serf. His capacious memoir finds room for relatives, friends, colleagues in science and protest, and a whole army of functionaries, and has the richness of a great Russian novel. The volume closes in 1986, when Gorbachev allowed Sakharov and his wife to return to Moscow from exile in Gorky.

Expats: Travels in Arabia, from Tripoli to Teheran, by Christopher Dickey (Atlantic Monthly; $18.95). Mr. Dickey was *Newsweek's* bureau chief in the Mideast from 1986 to 1989. Instead of the obligatory summing-up of a foreign correspondent's tour of duty, he has written a brief, elegant, and unpretentious journal of his impressions of "the new world created by juxtapositions of Arabia and America, Islam and suburbia" which he found in the cities, deserts, and waterways of the region. The period was one of uneasy political drift and sudden violence, as oil wealth attracted thousands of expatriate workers; as consumerism and the automobile meant that "the susurrous ambience of the desert tent has given way to an envelope of vinyl, steel and glass"; and as mines and Silkworm missiles became expressions of Islamic fundamentalism and the tangled international cold war over oil policies. Mr. Dickey is as good at evoking the exoticism of the Orientalist past, and the lure of what the British trekker Wilfred Thesiger called a "cleanness infinitely remote from the world of men," as he is at providing the gritty geopolitical facts and describing present-day cultural clashes.

Souvenir Portraits: Paris in the Belle Epoque, by Jean Cocteau, translated from the French by Jesse Browner (Paragon House; $17.95). In 1935, *Le Figaro* commissioned Cocteau to write a series of sketches of his childhood in Paris around the turn of the century, and of some of the extraordinary people who impressed and influenced him. Available now in a fine translation, these feuilletons are keenly evocative of that time. "A child's glance is quick to record," Cocteau writes. "Later on, he develops the prints." From an early age, he was enraptured by shows of every kind, and his gallery of portraits includes many of the greats of the stage—Réjane, Bernhardt, the tragedian Édouard de Max. The "prints" he develops in prose of the famous clowns Footit and Chocolat are as telling as those of Toulouse-Lautrec. Other high points are Cocteau's encounters with the ancient Empress Eugénie, and his hilarious stories of the Countess de Noailles, queen of the non-stop, non-stoppable talkers of the Paris salons. Illustrated with his own drawings and caricatures.

Note: "The Experience of Place," Tony Hiss's exploration of how we perceive and respond to our urban and rural environments, has been published by Knopf ($19.95). Nearly all the contents originally appeared in *The New Yorker.*

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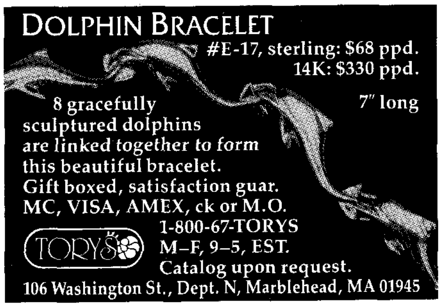

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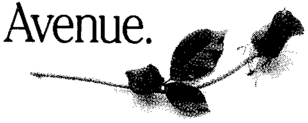

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